



**Window
on
Jordan**

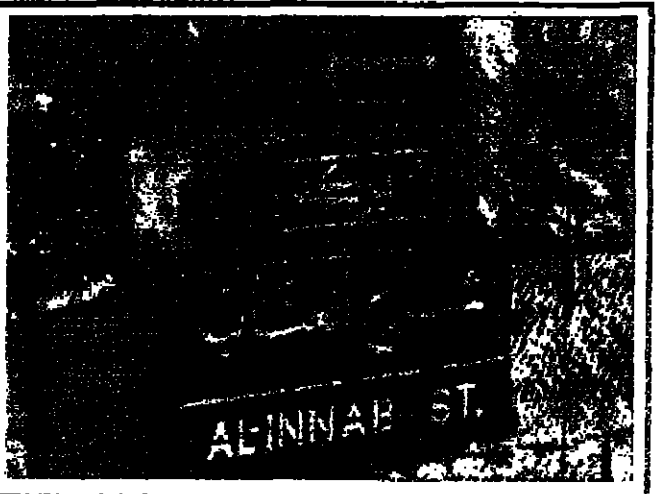
Know your own street by its proper name!

By Ghassan Jaha
Special to The Star
SHOULD YOU receive an invitation that reads, "We wish to invite you to a new art show in the Arts Expo, near the 90 and 50 embassy on Prince Rashid Square..." you could be excused for exclaiming, "Just where is Prince Rashid Square?!" (For you and me, Prince Rashid Square is more commonly known as the 6th Circle).
During the past 10 years, the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) began renaming the streets after distinguished people and historic events—of national and Arab origins. By then, however, peo-

ple had become used to the old, traditional names. "People always use names they are familiar with," Osama Abu Quora from the Department of Archaeology at the University of Jordan (UJ), told The Star. He adds that when someone is born and raised in an area where streets are named by locals, these names become memorized. "This issue relates to our culture, the way past generations have differentiated between districts," Dr Abu Quora continues.
"In renaming streets, GAM didn't consult locals, and this is something that caused a great

deal of resentment. The Municipality started to name streets after people or events that have historical or political significance. They moved beyond the names that are identified by local people, to those that have city or national recognition," Majdeeddin Khairi, from the Sociology Department at UJ told The Star.
Olla Eyyad, a secretary in Amman, now has to take time out to learn the new official street names. "Old names have been used since my childhood and are a lot more familiar to me, but

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The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly



Le Jourdain
Supplément en français du Star

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AMMAN, 23—29 JULY 1998, VOLUME 9, NUMBER 7, 350 FILS

اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

Government tries to dilute water scare but public still wary

By Ibtisam Awadat
Star Staff Writer

THE WATER scare continues to be headline news, despite the Ministry of Water and Irrigation's official declaration identifying the cause of the polluted drinking water. The problem has been attributed to the Zai Desalination Station, where dissolved algae in the water caused a distinct change in taste, colour and odour.
The Minister, Muneer Haddadin, himself drank a glass of water from the Zai Station to reassure the public that effective procedures had been carried out. The Ministry has also invited experts from the World Health Organization to double check on the filtering process undertaken at the station—a step which the Ministry hopes will bring the matter to an end.
Some experts in the private sector—who have complained of insufficient information on the pollution scare—remain skeptical.

mitted in clean water is 80 units, while in Jordan we have identified sources with chlorine of between 300-500 units," Hashem continued. "Too much chlorine in drinking water can cause indigestion and diarrhea."
One expert, who preferred to remain anonymous, fears

verify that the maintenance work carried out at the Zai Station meets specific standards, and secondly, we need to address the matter of Israel's continuous control on our water (which comes from Tiberias)—water which the Israelis refuse to drink, and is used only for irrigation purposes after it has been technically refined," he continued.
The official statements failed to reassure the public, who rushed out to buy drinking water from water-tankers who bring their water from either Zarqa or the Jen Al Basha reservoir (15 Kilometers to the north of the capital).

pany, told The Star.

Hadeetha mentioned that he has received a few complaints of higher prices from residents outside Amman, in addition to some cases of stockpiling bottles of mineral water, but in general the prices have remained stable. He added that the purchase of mineral water has not been limited to West Amman only, as all parts of the capital have seen an increase in consumption.
"People of moderate income, who normally consider mineral water to be a luxury item, are rushing every morning to buy bottles of mineral water," Hadeetha continued.



Water by the tanker—but is it clean?
Photo by George Kacenz

"When the algae is treated with chlorine, a carcinogen known as CHM can sometimes be formed, which can be of a health risk," said Ismail Hashem, a water engineer who is a partner in Hydrotech International, a consultancy firm in Jordan. The amount of chlorine in the water has alarmed experts as well. "The standard level of chlorine per-

the current problem is similar to what happened back in 1987, when some waste water got into the normal water supply. "We contained the situation then by closing the main tank (at Dabouk), and by getting rid of it's entire content," the expert told The Star.
"The problems we face today are twofold; we need to

tinue. A suspicious and health conscience public see mineral water as their savior. "Annually, our output increases by 25 percent during the summer high temperatures, but we have witnessed another 25 percent increase this year," Ramzi Hadeetha, general director of the Ghadeer Mineral Water Com-

Draft press law vote leads to fisticuffs

By Star Staff Writer

CONTRARY TO expectations, the majority of the National Guidance Committee (NGC) have decided to discuss the draft Press and Publication Law further, rather than turn it over to the government.
Lower House deputies Raji Haddadin, the head of the committee, Nayef Mouna, Amjad Al Majali, Abdallah Al Jazzy, Mohammed Rafat and Mohammed Al Kooz all voted in favor of keeping the draft under 'the Dome' for further discussion and analysis.
Opposition came from Mahmood Al Kharabsheh, Basam Haddadin and Hammada Fara'neh, who voted in favor of the second recommendation—to send the draft back to the government.
Wednesday's heated vote

on the draft was also the scene of fisticuffs between two of the NGC deputies, but this was brought to an end peacefully after their colleagues intervened.
"When we began to vote, Haddadin and I decided to refuse the draft, but at that moment Fara'neh addressed Haddadin and accused him of 'political hypocrisy.' Kharabsheh reacted angrily and it turned into a fist-fight. The rest of the members quickly intervened to disengage the two of them."
Kharabsheh then left the meeting but returned after a while and continued the reading of the first articles of the draft. Parliamentary sources said that Spokesman of the Parliament Saad Hayel Al Srouf attended the session as soon as he heard about the

Palestinian-Israeli talks kick off amid mood of pessimism

Combined news agencies

PESSIMISM IS still in the air. The talks between the Palestinians and Israelis that kicked off earlier this week may have a long way to go. Though initially hailed as the breakthrough in a 15 month deadlock, Palestinians are not happy.



Despite the meeting between the PNA's number two man, Mahmood Abbas and Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai Yitzhak Mordechai, no breakthrough was reported.
"There is still a lot of work. I don't want to create illusions," Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai told reporters. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu predicted round-the-clock talks at some stage.
However, there was gloom in the Palestinian camp. Arafat said that no progress has been made in the first direct talks with Israel on the scope of a West Bank troop withdrawal.
"Until now, nothing has come out of all the sessions that have been held, nothing that can give any positive indication that they are improving

their (the Israelis') position," Arafat said. "On the contrary, they are still repeating previous statements and positions."
Arafat waved off a reporter in Gaza, Monday, who asked him whether the meeting between Mordechai and Arafat's deputy Mahmood Abbas was a step forward.
"Nothing," was all the Palestinian leader would say, speaking in English. Asked to elaborate, Arafat's adviser Nabil Abu Rdainah said Arafat meant there was "still nothing new."

"We expected the Israeli side to come with a mandate saying 'Yes' to the American initiative and then to formulate an implementation mechanism," Palestinian senior negotiator Saeb Erekat told Voice of Palestine radio.
"But the Israeli side doesn't seem to want to say yes, they want further talks," he said.
Erekat however, told Israel Radio's English service that Mordechai had come to Sunday's meeting "in good faith" and that Palestinians would reserve judgment until later talks.

Washington, the main Middle East peace broker, wants Israel to hand over 13 percent of the West Bank in return for Palestinian security commitments. Israel has resisted the initiative.
According to Palestinian officials and diplomats, Israel is prepared to hand over 10 percent of West Bank land. This

falls short of the US proposal which suggested that Israel hand over 13.1 percent, and is well short of original Palestinian expectations of a 20 percent Israeli troop pullback.
Israel, at first, wanted the three percent difference between its proposal and that of the US to be carved out as a special zone, termed "Area D", in which Israel would have security control and the Palestinians would be subject to restrictions on building. This area is located around Jewish settlements.
During Monday's meeting, Israel suggested that Area D be designated a "green zone" in which neither Jews nor Palestinians would be permitted to build.
Palestinian negotiators have insisted they will accept nothing less than the 13 percent, having unequivocally agreed to the US proposals. Accepting anything less, a senior official said, would be more than difficult for the Palestinian leader to swallow and to sell to public opinion.
In the Knesset, Mordechai told reporters that the sides would be holding continuous talks on two issues at the heart of the dispute.
He did not elaborate but the two issues topping the agenda are likely to be the scope of the long-delayed Israeli handover of more West Bank land, and Israel's demand that the PLO

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Heat wave fuels escalating debate on global warming

By James Gerstenzang

WASHINGTON—With a wide swath of the nation caught in the enervating grip of a deadly summer heat wave, President Clinton and Vice President Al Gore have seized on the attention it has generated to warn of the dangers of global warming.
"As you can see from this sweltering heat, the climate of our country and our globe is changing," Clinton said Monday during an appearance in New Orleans.
But the science of global warming is much more complicated than that, as scientists, including government experts, have taken pains to emphasize.
It is unlikely that any one event can be attributed to global warming, they say, even though a trend to which it contributes—in this case record-setting high temperatures around the globe month after month—is said to prove that the world's cli-

mate is getting warmer.
"Global warming is a relatively small change from year to year, but it is always pushing in one direction," said Kevin Trenberth, one of the government's leading researchers studying climate change around the world. "A lot of what we're seeing at the moment is the kind of extremes we expect from global warming."
Several recent climate trends have fueled the debate over global warming.
For each of the first six months of 1998, the mean global temperature was warmer than it was during the corresponding month in 1997. The monthly trend was topped off in June, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration disclosed last week, when global surface temperatures were, on average, 1 degree Fahrenheit warmer than the long-term mean temperature for the month, according to records kept since 1880.



Action must be taken to reduce the rate of global warming

**World
REPORT**

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Know your own street by its proper name!

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for work. I must now get used to the new official street names," she tells *The Star*.

But Khalil Abdullah, who recently graduated and lives in Abdoun, has another viewpoint. He is enthusiastic about the new names, so long as they become standardized and reflect our origins. He says, "You can't use street names just because you like them. Ideally, a street name should reflect the city and the people who reside there. I now use the name 'Cairo Street', even though most people recognize it as 'Al Orthodox Club Street'."

Dr. Khatiri said that a formal transitional period is needed and this will take time. "Officials must take into account the desire of people when naming the streets. The media can help in this by making the idea more popularly acceptable," he continued.

Marwan Ellayan, manager of the Department of Naming and Numbering at GAM, does not agree. He said that public participation was very evident.

"Recommendations were received from people and we decided upon new names on that basis," he told *The Star*. His department recently finished naming 16 areas in Amman. The procedure began in the 1970s when Amman was a still small city, and 30 years on, most of these old names have become accepted by the people.

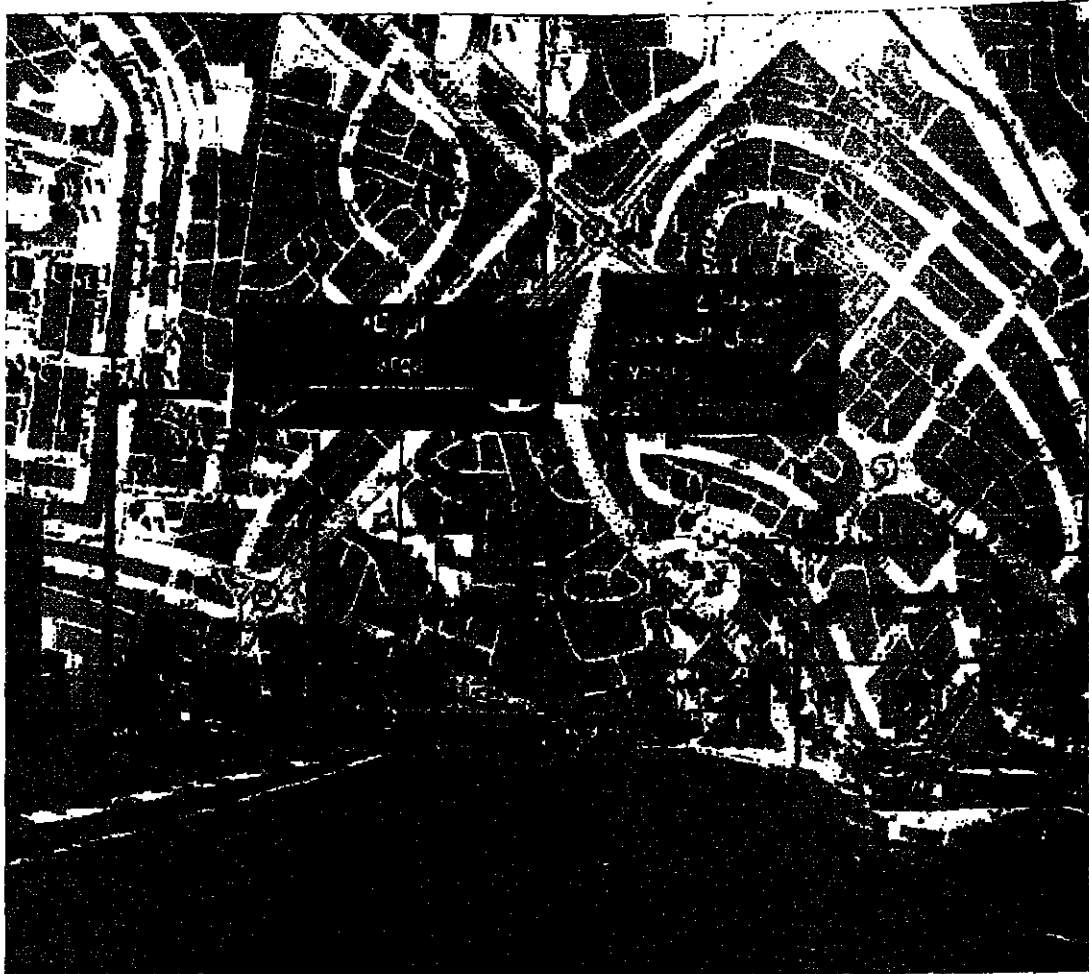
In 1987, GAM extended its boundaries to include outlying neighborhoods, and this resulted in a new

street naming policy. "We were then obliged to adopt new standards to avoid duplication," Mr. Ellayan said.

He gave the example of what used to be called "Garden Street". "Before the integration of Tla' El Ali to GAM, Garden Street was named by the then local municipality as Yathreb Street. Although it continued to be popularly known as Garden Street, GAM decided to change its official name to Wasfi Al Tal Street after the name of the late Jordanian Prime Minister." Mr. Ellayan added that this was made to avoid duplication. In this respect, he thanked the returnees who came to Amman after the Gulf war in 1991, as they helped to spread the official street names.

"It is forbidden to have a vocational license if you don't know the official name of the street you work on. These names serve the shop owners. I also wish to thank the Jordan Telecommunications Company (JTC) for their efforts in reinforcing the postal system according to the new naming and numbering procedures of the GAM." He urged all corporations, institutions and members of the public to follow the same path and use the official name of the street and intersection.

Mr. Ellayan revealed that a special government committee (comprising Ministers of Transport, Public Works, Information and Municipalities, as well as the Mayor of Amman) is currently streamlining the postal system according to the DNN procedures. ■



What's the use of official street names?

For the Record

King receives call from Clinton

MAYO CLINIC (Petra)—His Majesty King Hussein, currently staying at the Mayo Clinic, received a phone call from the US President Bill Clinton who inquired after the King's health. His Majesty also received a similar phone call from US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in which she inquired after the King's health and wished Him continued good health.

Anani visits Palestinian areas

RAMALLAH (Petra)—Deputy Prime Minister for Development Affairs and Minister of Foreign Affairs Jawad Anani made a short visit to the Palestinian controlled areas last week during which he relayed a letter from HRH Crown Prince Hassan the Regent to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat. The letter focused on the latest movements to revive the peace process. In statements to reporters before heading for Ramallah, Dr. Anani said President Arafat had telephoned Crown Prince Hassan to brief him on the results of his recent visit to China. The Foreign Minister was officially received in Ramallah by a number of senior Palestinian officials and Head of the Jordanian Representation Office in Gaza. Anani also held discussions with the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in West Jerusalem. The talks focused on ways of pushing the peace process forward. Mr. Anani conveyed to Netanyahu the Jordanian leadership's assertion that peace with the Palestinians should be a priority. He expressed Jordan's keenness to push the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations forward to achieve a just and comprehensive peace. "Our meetings with both the Palestinians and Israelis shows that Jordan supports the peace process and should pave the way for the final status negotiations," he added. Mr. Netanyahu, in his part commended Jordan's role in achieving the Hebron agreement.

Cairo meeting for Barcelona process

CAIRO (Petra)—A roundtable meeting for members of the Barcelona process was held at the Egyptian Foreign Ministry last week with the participation of Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Mauritania and Libya. The meeting aims to create a free Arab-European trade zone and greater Arab cooperation. The meeting was the fifth of its kind.

Minister of tourism holds press conference

USA (Petra)—Minister of Tourism Aqel Beltaji said this week that his recent visit to USA came about from an invitation from the Ramallah Club, following a speaking engagement at their annual meeting. Beltaji affirmed in a press conference that during his visit he discussed with Mrs. Suzanne James Baker the preparations for the International Peace Conference, due to be held in Jordan with the participation of about 3,000 people. Beltaji said also that he discussed with the American Tourism and Travel Agents Society the preparations regarding their forthcoming conference, due to be held between 14-18 October this year. Her Majesty Queen Noor will be the main speaker. The minister also discussed with the president of American National Geographic Society the preparations regarding the Jordanian fair, due to be opened by Her Royal Highness Princess Zarvath El Hassan in December.

King confers medal on Belgian ambassador

AMMAN (Petra)—His Majesty King Hussein conferred on the outgoing Belgian ambassador in Amman the Istiqbal (Independence) medal of the First Order in the Kingdom. Foreign Minister Jawad Anani presented the medal to the ambassador.

Heat wave fuels escalating debate on global warming

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But critics of the global warming theory say measurements taken anywhere from 5,000 to 30,000 feet above the Earth—which, some say, show little recent change or perhaps even a cooling trend—are more meaningful.

In addition to the temperature increase at the Earth's surface, drought in Florida contributed to the devastating fires there over the past several weeks, and torrential downpours produced unusually fierce flood torrents in the northeastern United States.

Were those events related to global warming? Again, the answer is not clear-cut.

Warmer temperatures may have pushed back the start of the summer rainy season in Florida, scientists say, and thus induced greater evaporation from the surface of the ocean, lifting more moisture into the atmosphere, carrying it elsewhere, and then dropping it in sudden, intense storms.

"When you put the whole picture together, one should conclude that global warming is playing a role," said Trenberth, head of the climate analysis section of the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colo. "A few degrees on top

of what would already be a heat wave pushes the edge a bit more. It goes over a threshold, and things are no longer tolerable."

On the other hand, he added: "Most of what is going on is summertime. It's supposed to be hot. Maybe it's a bit hotter than it would be...."

Reflecting scientists' uncertainty about when the occasionally unusual crosses the line to become a demonstrable trend, as well as his conviction that "the atmosphere is a pretty chaotic, hard-to-understand system," Randall Cerveny, a climatologist at Arizona State Univer-

sity, said: "If we were to see many, many more heat waves each and every year, that would be a trend associated with global warming."

Gore and, increasingly, Clinton, have been among the more vocal political adherents of the global warming theory—reflecting the widespread agreement, but certainly not unanimity, among climate scientists and others who have studied climate data that the Earth's climate has been growing measurably warmer, most notably in the past decade. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Palestinian-Israeli talks kick off amid mood of pessimism

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carry out a promised annulment of a covenant backing Israel's destruction.

No Israeli or Palestinian engaged in the talks would discuss the substance of the negotiations.

Asked what lay ahead, Netanyahu told reporters: "Negotiations... and I called for

them day and night. I don't mean by that we have to sit at 3 o'clock in the morning but it will probably come to that as well."

But for the Israelis there is the domestic issue to be considered. Ariel Sharon and other coalition members threatened to bring down Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu if he agreed to go ahead with the 13.1% proposal, with Sharon, the minister considered most capable of leading a right-wing revolt, warning that the government would fall if it went ahead.

Sharon, who serves as infrastructure minister, is on a visit to China and issued the warning in a telephone call to Ariei Deri, leader of the ultra-Orthodox Shas Party, radio reports said.

Netanyahu also came under fire from Agriculture Minister Rafael Eitan, leader of the far-right Tsomet Party that ran on a joint slate with Netanyahu's Likud Party in the 1996 elections.

Eitan said he would quit the coalition if Netanyahu handed over more than 7 percent of the West Bank.

Netanyahu's coalition has 61 legislators in the 120-seat parliament. The departure of the Tsomet party from the coalition, which has five lawmakers, would deprive Netanyahu of his parliamentary majority.

Uri Elitsur, chief of staff in the prime minister's office, said Netanyahu might call early elections if he felt his government was in danger. "All the options are open," Elitsur told Israel army radio.

"Bibi is not moved by coal-

Draft press law vote leads to fisticuffs

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quarrel.

He met with the two deputies and urged them to forget their dispute for the sake of the country and warned them not to cause divisions between members of the Lower House. Fara'neh duly apologized to Kharabsheh and the session continued.

Seven articles of the draft were discussed and modified. The definition of the minister of information, the press and publication department, and the definition of director,

however, will remain in accordance with the 1993 law.

Kharabsheh stated that the word propagation has been added to the definition of publication. It now reads, "publication means any propagation of thoughts, words, figures, shapes and so on."

Article three stipulates that "the press is free and freedom of expression is guaranteed in words, photography, painting and any other means of expression and media." The word "printing" was added, and the article now covers "press and printing"—an important stipulation covering the work of journalists.

"The committee also endorsed the article which permits journalists to keep the confidentiality of their sources unless they decide to reveal them," Kharabsheh said.

Lawyer Kharabsheh told *The Star* that the Parliament will not pass any law which restricts the press and freedom of expression, which is recognized in any truly democratic country. Discussions on the draft will carry on until early next week. ■



Taking to the water-pipe!

Former Prime Minister Taher Al Masri takes time off from the hectic world of politics and relaxes with a nargileh.

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Vic at Piano Piano

NO, NOT Vicks. VIC! Vic Kotzen, an internationally recognized singer, dancer and entertainer, is now giving Amman a taste of his international style.

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JORDAN

W E E K



An unconventional
report on Jordanian
news and views edited
by Marwan Al Asmar



Tawjihi results Friday

Minister of Education Mohammed Hamdan will announce the Tawjihi results this Friday, 24 July. This will be done at a news conference held in the Ministry building at 9:30am.

Postponed

President of the Information Committee for the "National Conference to Resist Unemployment", Dr Zohair Al Kayed, said that the conference will be delayed for one month. It was due to start on 16 August, however, he stressed that it was being put off for one month to give the private sector a chance to prepare. He says that the date is yet to be fixed, but the event will take place under royal patronage.

No changes in Brotherhood policy

With elections to the Shura Council out of the way it appears that it will be back to the grindstone for the Muslim Brotherhood.

Although the doves have been marginalized, leaving the way open for the moderates and the hawks, it appears that things are getting back to normal, at least on the home policy front. The re-election of the Overseer of the Muslim Brotherhood, Abdel Majeed Thuneibat, means that policies and agendas will more or less stay the same. What is important for the Brotherhood is their long-awaited meeting with His Majesty King Hussein. Besides this, political observers are wondering whether they would be willing to re-enter the country's democratic institutions and join the government.

Lieth Shbeilat

The Court of Cassation upheld the decision of the State Security Court to imprison Lieth Shbeilat for a nine month sentence. Shbeilat, an opposition figure, and a former President of the Jordan Engineers Association was charged with inciting riots in Maan last February.

Ministerial calm!

The tiff between the Minister of Interior, Nader Rashid and the Minister of Finance Sulaiman Al Hafez appears to be a storm in a tea cup. Mr Rashid says that he isn't remotely thinking of resigning from the government. He said that we speak as one government and that the objective is to serve the higher interest of the nation. However, the tussle was about financial matters relating to the last parliamentary elections. He said that the finances from the last elections are still outstanding, and that employees who dealt with the elections' administration have not been paid yet.

Conference postponed

Just when it was about to start, it was hurriedly put off. "The role of the professional association in democracy and civil society", a seminar which was due to start last Tuesday was postponed. Officials in the Professional Associations (PA) said that they would need more time to decide whether they could take part. At the heart of the dispute is the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Al Urdun Al Jadid Studies Center. PA leaders say that they want more information about the organizers, who they fear have "outside links". Director of Al Urdun Al Jadid Hani Al Hourani said that his center, and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, had long been the targets of accusations of normalization with Israel, something which he strongly denies.

Truancy in Zerqa

A recent study by the head of the Planning Division in the Education Directorate of Zerqa, found that the level of truancy in that part of the world is becoming a worry. He suggests that 94 out of every 10,000 pupils at primary level either leave school or play truant. The number of pupils at primary level is 125,377.

Political pluralism

Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Saad Hayel Srour stressed Jordan's keenness to enhance the democratic process in the country. In a meeting with the visiting President of the London-based Arab Organization for Human Rights, Dr Abdel Hussein Sha'ban, Srour expressed Jordan's support for the organization, and its efforts in the field of human rights. He asserted the importance of exchanging field visits with a view to increasing cooperation between the two parties. Mr Sha'ban commended Jordan's democratic progress, as well as the political pluralism which prevails in Jordan.

Algerian statement

The Algerian ambassador in Jordan Hameed Shubeira said that the Algerian government's initiative to call the UN General Secretary to form a group of dignitaries of international repute to visit Algeria comes within the transparency policy followed by the government. In a statement issued this week, Shubeira said that the Algerian government has nothing to hide and that the Algerian government has chosen the path of democracy. The ambassador welcomed the nomination of former Jordanian Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti as member of this group. Shubeira affirmed that the group will not have any investigative or fact-finding powers, and would not be allowed to make contact with any faction which does not work within the state's law.

King Hussein well, waits for results



AMMAN (Petra)—His Majesty King Hussein sent a letter to His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan the Regent, Monday, explaining his current medical condition and assuring him and all Jordanians that he is feeling better and is in high spirits.

The letter said that the medical team at the Mayo Clinic have diagnosed His Majesty's ill health to Lymphoma, although they added that they have to wait until next Tuesday to receive the full results of the histopathology tests conducted this week.

The reason for the medical team's uncertainty at this stage, His Majesty said, is that although the symptoms and examined Lymph node all point to Lymphoma, there is no compatibility between the cells being tested—leading experts believe that it could be something else.

His Majesty added that the peripheral blood picture is better than before despite a severe decrease in the neutrophil and platelet count which has not improved since His Majesty's arrival at the Mayo Clinic. If this condition is confirmed next Tuesday, His Majesty said doctors will begin an immediate programme of chemotherapy—but that they prefer to wait the full results of the tests before resorting to chemotherapy, as this might negatively affect the neutrophil and platelet count. His Majesty said his general condition is better. He added that the Mayo medical team are working diligently in cooperation with specialized units within the United States, and that President Clinton's private physician has also been placed at His Majesty's service. Mayo Clinic doctors say that the favor has been brought under control.

The King assured the Crown Prince and his beloved family, that his morale is very high and that he is generally feeling better, and he sent his best wishes to all the people of Jordan.

Prince Hassan also sent a message to the King and Queen Noor conveying his greetings and best wishes as well as those of Princess Serwah and the Jordanian people. The Prince said "We pray to the Almighty that the results will be as reassuring as we always hoped for, and that you will return to us well and healthy."

The King's scheduled visit to France has been postponed. However, Royal Court Chief Dr Fayez Khasawneh, met French President Jacques Chirac, Wednesday.

Tussle over 'national conference' continues unabated

By Ibtisam Awadat
Star Staff Writer

THE CALL for a 'National Conference for Salvation and Reform' (NCSR) surfaced after some opposition parties decided to boycott the 1997 parliamentary elections—raising fears of a curtailment in freedom of speech. With the aim of defending individual and collective rights, political parties of all persuasions, professional associations, and respected individuals (known collectively as the 'powers of reform') began calling for the establishment of an executive committee to help organize a National Conference (the only other National Conference took place in 1928, after the declaration of Transjordan).

An executive committee was duly formed, and Dr Abdelatif Arabiyat, the appointed secretary general, said whilst summarising the aims of the conference, "everyone has the right to express and present a reform program. This is especially relevant today following the government's current policy of restricting freedoms. Our agenda is to look at political, economic, social, reform and restructuring issues."

The government is opposed to this movement, and the Minister of Interior Nader Rashid was reported as saying, "We (the Ministry) will deal with it (the National Conference) when the executive committee presents its application to hold the event." Dr Arabiyat condemned the government opposing stance, as the conference aims to bring out the best in the country. Regarding the Ministry's request for registering the conference, Dr Arabiyat commented that "all the participating parties have been given legal authorisation already, so any committee or activity affiliated to them has to be automatically approved. We don't need authorization; only permission to hold the conference on a national scale."

Some members of the executive committee attribute the need for a National Conference to other factors. Dr Saeed Thyab, secretary general of the Popular Unity Party (PUP) said, "The political situation in the region—Israel/Turkey/Jordan alliance at the expense of a united Arab stand—calls for this meeting." He pointed out that there are other political, economic and social factors at play. "The nation's deteriorating economic condition, the increase in unemployment, and the rise in number of people living under the poverty line," Dr Thyab said.

The mechanism for organizing such a conference began when the executive committee sent invitations to 150 different societies; a preparatory committee was then elected on 13 June 1998. The executive committee contains 34 members and represents all the political parties. In addition to the opposition, Brotherhood and Al Mostaqbal parties, the committee includes individual women, student unions, and work associations. There were rumors of a split in the executive committee, with the Islamists dominating the conference and its committees.

"The PUP suggested a shared leadership instead of a single president and two deputies, but the majority chose the second option," Dr Thyab continued.

Dr Saeed Abu Meizar, former president of the Dentists Association, provided another reason for holding the conference. "It's a fact that most political parties in Jordan suf-

fer from a lack of facilities. Our headquarters are not large enough to absorb the different meetings."

Only the Islamic Action Front has sufficient space," Abu Meizar commented. He went on to say that the draft press law—aimed at restricting the freedom of expression—and the stalemate in the peace process were reason enough to set up a National Conference. "We need to make a firm stance against all attempts to violate our independence," said Dr Abu Meizar. "Our political stance needs internal reform; we need to activate the arti-

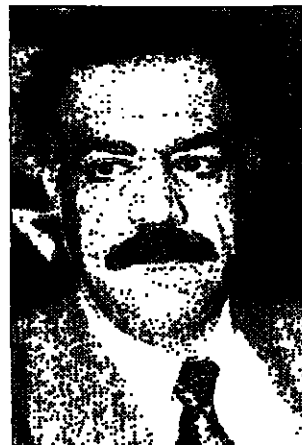
cles of the Constitution and to guarantee the independence of both the legislative and judicial authorities from the interference of the executive authority," he continued.

After a two year effort, the National Conference was due to take place at the end of this month. However, this date has been postponed, as further discussion is needed on the possible content of the conference.

"We hope the government understands our goals for the conference and that it will respect our right of expression," Arabiyat continued.



Arabiyat



Abu Meizar

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Our Say...

US, UK relent at last

NEWS THAT the United States and Britain are now willing to allow two Libyans accused of blowing up a Pan Am flight over the Scottish town of Lockerbie in 1988—which killed 270 people—to stand trial in The Hague, is an important and much awaited reversal in position by the two countries. Since 1992 Libya has been under UN sanctions for refusing to extradite the two men, accused of direct involvement in the bombing, to be tried in either the United States or Scotland. Libya has always maintained that its two nationals will not receive a fair trial in either country. Instead, it has offered to deliver the two men to appear before a court in a neutral country before an independent panel of judges.

The United States and Britain had rejected any compromise with the Libyans, but in recent years the Libyans have been scoring important political and legal gains in their effort to end the sanctions and reach a deal over the Lockerbie issue. The most important of these victories was the announcement in February that the International Court of Justice in The Hague is ready to hear an application from Libya calling for the suspects to be tried in a third country.

In addition, support for the sanctions was rapidly waning, especially since Organization of African Countries (OAC) leaders announced in June that they will defy the UN sanctions. Many flew to Tripoli last week to visit Libya's President Qaddafi in an open defiance of the air embargo. Libya's position was even endorsed by representatives of the victims' families, some of whom visited Tripoli recently and met with Libyan officials. With the sanctions slowly crumbling, Washington and London grew increasingly isolated and it was time that both agreed to reverse their position and get the legal process of putting the two suspects on trial moving.

The trial at The Hague, once it takes place, should finally expose the truth about what really happened to Flight 103 and about Libya's involvement in that disaster. An agreement on the venue should also pave the way for an immediate lifting of sanctions against the Arab country. It is ironic that after more than seven years of refusing to give the Libyan offer the benefit of the doubt, the US and Britain should suddenly shift their position. One wonders if the motives behind the intransigence of both countries had anything to do with serving justice and the victims of the Lockerbie tragedy in the first place. ■

Pakistan Rangers guard a street July 21 after they removed barricades and hurdles from the streets of the area. A Sind province spokesman said that a search for 181 of the city's most wanted people will begin. More than 70 people have been killed in a month in Karachi in ethnic, sectarian and political violence.

Reuters



Eye on Jordan Reliving the past for free!

Dr Nabil El-Sherif

WE ARE indeed an ungrateful society. We do not clearly appreciate the fact that we are probably the only people who can actually see and smell our water before drinking it!

We do not also express our gratitude to the government that has sent us back through the time-tunnel to an era where people were expected to boil water before drinking it.

The government had indeed given us free passage through the time tunnel to physically experience the kind of life our forefathers were living around the turn of the century.

But the government was merciful enough not to throw in the added experience of picking dry pieces of wood to make fire for cooking!

We are indeed an ungrateful bunch of people. We do not also appreciate the fact that the government is working round the clock to introduce a press law that would give us a free taste of how things were done at the turn of the century.

In that wonderful "age of innocence," the government decided what the people should read or hear (TV was not invented then!). The government knew what



El-Sherif

was in people's best interests, and it acted accordingly.

Nowadays, there is a spirited government attempt to re-create these golden days of controlled media. According to

the new press law, even brochures that explain the function of home appliances will not escape the government's watchful eye and its attempt to safeguard our noble values!

We are indeed an ungrateful people, for we do not appreciate the fact that the government is trying to fend off the "conspirators" who talk about a "discrepancy" in the figures of our economic growth rate. The government is trying hard not to waste any time solving the matter, but it is making every effort to blame previous governments for the problem. This kind of bickering used to happen before monitoring institutions were created. This also gives us a free glimpse of what things were like before the state and its institutions were established!

In other countries, one has to pay large sums of money to relive the past or to experience what things were like few decades ago.

Our government is giving us this experience free of charge! For this, shouldn't we be grateful? ■

The writer, who is the Chief Editor of Ad-Dustour Arabic daily, is a regular contributor to The Star

Book Review

Making peace at the negotiating table

The Process: 1,100 days that changed the Middle East, by Uri Savir. Random House \$27.95, 336 pages.

Reviewed by
Judy Dempsey

THIS IS probably one of the most exhilarating, yet one of the most depressing, accounts of how Israelis and Palestinians sat down together at the negotiating table to make peace.

It is exhilarating because Uri Savir, then director-general of Israel's foreign ministry and its chief peace negotiator, is the first to give a blow-by-blow account of how both sides came to respect each other in a bid to end decades of mutual hatred and conflict.

But it is extremely depressing because Savir shows how the fate of the peace process depended on very few people. He admits the main (Labour party) protagonists, the late Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres and himself failed to get the message across to a wider public that if the process failed, Israel would have neither peace nor security.

The story opens in May 1993 when Peres, then foreign minister, asked Savir to visit Oslo. A week later, the young diplomat was in a secret mountain retreat, a guest of Terje Larsen, a Norwegian social scientist and head of a peace institute.

For months, Larsen had hosted secret unofficial talks between Yair Hirschfeld and Ron Pundak (two Israeli academics) and three Palestinians, including Abu Ala, a close friend of Yasser Arafat. But Rabin reckoned the time was right to make the talks formal. The Soviet Union, once the patron of several Middle Eastern countries, had collapsed. The Gulf war had weakened Arafat. And Rabin and Peres, who disagreed on many things, agreed that Israel could no longer continue to occupy the West Bank and Gaza.

Ending that occupation through negotiation was Savir's task. But he soon discovered there was a psychological dimension as well. He had to re-



Arafat, Peres and the late Rabin in happier times

move a battery of prejudices he held about the Palestinians, about his own people, and about Abu Ala, who, over the 1,100 days, was to become his negotiating partner and friend.

The first sense that the peace process was as much mental as political came on the evening of Savir's first night in Norway, shortly after Larsen had introduced him to Abu Ala as, "your enemy number one."

The dapper, shrewd Palestinian asked Savir why, given Israel's military might, it viewed the PLO as an existential threat. "I reflected briefly," writes Savir. "You are a threat, because you want to live in my home. In my house."

"Where are you from?" asked Abu Ala.

"Jerusalem," I replied. "So am I," he continued, sombrely. "Where is your father from?"

"He was born in Germany."

"Mine was born in Jerusalem and still lives there."

"Why don't you ask about my grandfathers and their forebears. I'm sure we can debate the past for years and never agree. Let's see if we can agree

about the future."

That is what Savir and Abu Ala did over the next 1,100 days, focusing on how Israel could hand over land to the Palestinians in exchange for peace. Rabin, Peres and Arafat were kept informed at all times.

The PLO leader was an unpredictable negotiator, wary of bequeathing too much power to Abu Ala. While the Israeli side came prepared to all sessions, set the agenda and was backed by a team of lawyers, the Palestinian side was disorderly.

Arafat only started getting his act together after he signed the Declaration of Principles in September 1993, in which Israel and the PLO mutually recognised each other. That also paved the way for the 1995 Interim Agreement, which granted limited autonomy to parts of the West Bank and Gaza until a final settlement.

Arafat had one goal: the return of land to create a Palestinian state. Yet throughout those 3,500 hours of negotiations, Peres never told Arafat how much land he could expect after Israel withdrew

from the West Bank.

Benjamin Netanyahu, elected prime minister two years ago after running one of the most venomous campaigns in the country's history, said the Oslo accords posed a "danger to the existence of Israel." It was "an act of surrender." But Savir reveals that Labour never compromised on security.

Yet while Rabin and Peres were tough negotiators, they always kept the door open because they believed that the peace process had to be nurtured and encouraged. Even during the worst moments—Rabin's assassination in November 1995 by an extremist Jew who opposed the peace process, or the Hamas suicide bomb attacks the following spring—Peres kept talking to Arafat. Savir believes it was that dialogue and trust which sustained the process.

None of that exists today, which bodes ill for Israel's—and the region's—prospects for peace and security. Once again, the left is failing to put this message across. ■

Middle East Beat by Khairi Janbek

Assad in Paris



PARIS—The visit of President Assad to France was a surprise for a number of reasons. Assad is not a habitual traveler, and very rarely leaves his country. President Jacques Chirac, meanwhile, does not usually meet heads of state at the airport, or at the bottom of the stairs of the Elysee Palace.

The visit was reported at length in the Arab world and in Israel, and the motivation behind the trip for both presidents has been painstakingly analysed.

For President Assad, the trip was aimed at drumming up support for Syria's application for an association agreement with the EU. The traditionally pivotal role of France in the EU is an opportune place to lobby support for the Syrians, who want to open up their economy to the world market and integrate into the international financial system.

Predictably, and probably not to Assad's liking, the peace negotiations have featured strongly in the visit. The Lebanon-Israeli peace track took up a large share of the discussions.

For President Chirac, the visit of the Syrian president provided further encouragement for France to re-enter Middle East politics. President Chirac is seeking a large role in the area, enhancing the position of his own country and thus bringing a reluctant EU into the process.

France has shown a distinct distaste of Mr Netanyahu's policies, yet remains an ardent supporter of the peace process. In concentrating on the Lebanon-Israeli peace track, France has an ideal opportunity to become a peace broker in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

For Chirac, there was another issue on the agenda; that of ex-Nazi fugitives who have been residing in Syria for some time. The nature of this is unclear. On the one hand, it provides a reconciliatory gesture to Israel from an increasingly critical France. At the same time it is an assurance to the various Jewish groups in France that the criticism of Israel does not entail any anti-Semitic tones.

All in all, the immediate consequences of the trip serves both presidents well, giving them both a high public relations profile.

In the long-term, however, it is hoped that both presidents will have learned from the experience.

President Chirac, will have to learn that the EU's economic strength does not always translate to political strength as well. He may be in luck in this instance, as it is the Syrian president who is seeking support for an EU association agreement—the basis of which is undoubtedly economic. The amount of political mileage gained by Mr Chirac will depend on how many concessions he can extract from the Syrian president. Assad is not expected to become an intrepid traveler; rather he has arrived at a juncture in his long career, and has learnt about the effects of economic limitations on the ability to make sound political decisions.

In seeking economic advantages from Europe, Assad will have to balance them against the political concessions that will be demanded of him, as the negotiations with the EU commence. For a start, the Syrian-Lebanese-Israeli peace track will come under severe pressure. Assad will be playing his usual game: extract most, yield least. ■

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(NEWS ITEM: Clinton will visit Russia in September and meet with Yeltsin. He will also visit India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Malaysia in November.)

Business scene

■ Total loans and financial aid granted by the European Union to Jordan from 1977 to 1997 reached ECU's 329 million (\$430 million). These include grants and soft loans, according to a recent study on the economic and political cooperation between Jordan and the EU. This is in addition to other forms of financial assistance awarded to Jordan to support the economic restructuring program and provide finance to NGOs, cultural and social activities.

■ The Industrial Development Bank has offered 2456 loans worth \$ 250 million, since it was established. Loans are granted to finance developing projects in industrial and tourism sectors throughout the kingdom.

■ The first Arab "ISO 9000 Show" was opened last Monday, under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Hassan. Opening the Expo on behalf of the Regent was the Foreign Minister Dr Jawad Al Anani, who stressed the importance of the ISO 9000 certificates for standards and specifications. About 90 companies are taking part in the five-day expo, organized by Expo Jordan Co. from Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Lebanon and the United Arab Emirates. So far, 120 Jordanian companies have been ISO 9000 certified, in Egypt, 160 companies have been certified, in Saudi Arabia, 18, in Oman, 35, in Bahrain, 4, in Lebanon, 24, in Syria, 4 in Yemen and 9 in Palestine. The total number of ISO 9000 certified companies in the Arab World is 300.

■ The Jordan National Insurance Company generated net profits estimated at JD 1.74 million during the fiscal year ending in March, 1998. The company's annual report showed that its total premiums reached JD 10.85 million. Its assets were JD 21.08 million compared with JD 20.65 million in 1997. Total profits of JD 600,000 were divided among shareholders, at 12% of the share's nominal value.

Foreign Exchange

Wednesday, 22 JULY

	Buy JD	Sell JD
US\$	0.7080	0.7100
£	1.1510	1.1560
DM	0.4124	0.4145
SP	0.4801	0.4825
FRF	0.1227	0.1253
YEN (100)	0.5624	0.5652
DM	0.3667	0.3685
£ (100)	0.8419	0.8421

Deputies and analysts continue to express outrage over misleading growth rate figures

By Ilham Sadeq
Star Staff Writer

THE ISSUE of growth rates is still the talk of the town as it was the core discussion between the economic team in the government and the Financial and Economic Committee at the Lower House.

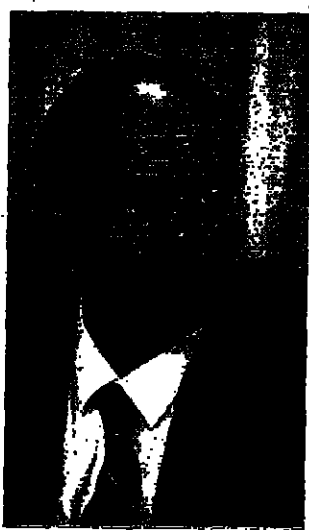
The head of the committee, Mr Ali Abu Al Raghib, briefed the press last Sunday on the outcome of the discussions to clarify the situation.

This may calm the outraged deputies who have continued to condemn the government's economic policies and criticize it for hiding the facts from people.

Mr Abu Al Raghib said that the dialogue between the committee and the government was "frank and reflects the spirit of responsibility." The committee has tackled the economic restructuring program, and other issues relating to monetary and fiscal reforms, such as loans and financial aid strategies.

However, some analysts argue that the difference in growth figures is due to external factors such as weak trade links with Iraq and the Palestinian territories. They say that the UN sanctions imposed on Iraq following the Iraq-Kuwait Gulf War, and the blocking of the Palestinian markets are responsible for losses to the Jordanian economy.

Time has proved, however, that the real cause of Jordan's economic problems comes from within. Mr Abu Al Raghib doesn't deny this. "It



Ammar

has become completely obvious that the difference in growth figures in the years 1996 and 1997 is because of a decline in construction projects, processing industries and low tax figures," he stated. Nonetheless, he did not deny the impact of some regional economic and social factors that are beyond the control of officials and decision makers.

We must not blame outside factors for our failure to maintain high growth and real economic prosperity. Whether the economic restructuring program has served positively or negatively, it is too early to say, although there is a tendency at present to stress the many negative effects of the program.

Prominent economic expert Ammar Al Nammari elaborated, "I think that the contradiction in figures is an inevitable result of submission to the instructions of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which always assures us that our economy is doing well and going on the right track."

"This bright picture soon fades when reality is discovered. In the end, these figures are the only available evidence that local economic sectors are suffering because of this program, as poverty is reaching high levels peoples' purchasing power is diminishing," Al Nammari maintained.

He continued to say that many experts have repeatedly wanted the government against hiding the truth from people, but to no avail. He refuted the argument that Israeli measures to block our national products is the main reason for the decline in Jordanian exports as the Palestinian markets have never been a main target in any case. Neither is it worth blaming the Gulf War for our diminishing exports to Iraq.

"The error lies in the economic policies that began with the implementation of the program," Al Nammari stated. He went on to describe the introduction of the free-market economy as merely being "chaos caused by capital output."

As we pointed out in the last issue of *The Star*, some deputies called for the resignation of the government and said that penalties should be issued against those officials



Abu Al Raghib

involved in releasing the wrong figures. There has been some speculation, however, that a cabinet reshuffle might take place soon, although this has not been confirmed. Cynics warn that the situation is critical and that the government is now struggling with so many dilemmas, but particularly over the issue of the misleading growth figures.

An angry deputy, Nazih Ammarin, stressed that the situation must not be discussed behind closed doors. Referring to the growth rates, Mr Ammarin told *The Star*, "We don't trust the government's figures, so we called for the government to meet with the Lower House and put the issue on the agenda of the House's extraordinary session, but we have received no reply."

Mr Ammarin has called for a vote of no confidence in the government for misleading the people and disclosing false results on economic growth. "The irony is that the government was given the Lower House's confidence on the basis of these false figures when we approved the budget," he said.

The outraged deputy shared Mr Ali Nammari's view that the current situation is the product of the economic restructuring program, which

is already taking its toll on citizens. The drastic decline in people's purchasing power due to excessive price hikes in consumer goods, coupled with the rise of unemployment and poverty throughout the kingdom are a direct result of the program.

Taking an objective view of the situation, Mr Ammarin stated, "I don't exempt the Lower House deputies from sharing the responsibility with the government. We have to admit that we failed, as deputies and as a government."

He continued to say that all of the economic laws which have been approved so far will lead to the destruction of the country, both economically and socially. Among the approved acts being hampered by the deputy is the cancellation of the Ministry of Supply (which is desperately needed in the current circumstances). Returning to a high lending policy is also strongly criticized by Ammarin, as are several other government approved policies.

Another issue that Ammarin contests is the EU-Jordanian partnership agreement, which he describes as against the welfare of the country. "How can we make such an incompatible pact while our national industry is still unable to compete with our European counterparts?" he wondered.

Finally, the deputy stressed that it is imperative to be bold enough to shoulder the responsibility of the crisis, and deal with all critical matters more transparently and open-mindedly in future, instead of discussing them behind closed doors.

The Lower House is expected to release a report on the results of its discussions soon. Reactions to the disclosure of the misleading growth rate figures have been so strong that many analysts believe this report will be substantial and that immediate action will be taken to rectify the situation.

Arab Bank announced its mid-annual results

THE ARAB Bank group, considered one of the biggest private banking bodies in the region, recently disclosed its mid-annual results.

The group's pre-tax profits were \$163 million compared with \$135.17 million in the same time last year. This shows a rise of \$27.83 million, which equals a growth of 20.59%.

The chairman of the AB board, Mr Abdul Majeed Shoman described these results as positive and attributed them to appropriate planning and the well-studied expansion of the ABs banking operations.

After tax, net profits were \$125.72 million, showing a growth ratio of 15.8% compared with the first half of 1997.

The AB's balance stood at \$22.91 billion at the end of last month. This is against \$21.11 billion, at the end of June 1997, indicating growth of approximately 8.48%.

Gross revenues rose from \$252.64 million in the first half last year to \$305.59 million, an increase of 16.35%.

The statement on profits and losses showed that the AB group achieved net interest and commission estimated at \$260.14 million up to last June, compared with \$231 million in the same period last year, up 12.62%.

Trading in foreign currencies brought revenue of \$20.91 million by the end of last June, compared with \$14.84 million by the end of June 1997, a rise of 40.89%.

Mr Shoman pointed out that AB has expanded its investment portfolio in securities by 15.76% during the first half of this year, to reach \$1.76 billion compared with \$1.52 billion in the first half of 1997.

Credit facilities recorded a 9.9% growth to hit \$7789.5 million last June compared with \$7087.6 million in June 1997.

Fixed assets also increased from \$108.45 million in the first half of last year to \$142.49 million last June, a rise of 30.78%.

Clients' deposits rose by 7.66% to reach \$11.38 billion by the end of last June, up from \$10.57 billion at the same time last year. The Bank's deposits also went up by 5.86% to reach \$3.18 billion against \$3 billion the previous year.

The mid-annual report also revealed that the shareholders rights rose by 12.38% to reach nearly \$1558 million, an increase of \$171 million on last year.

Paid-up capital is estimated at \$146.94 million, a rise of \$62 million the same time last year. Obligatory reserves stood at \$79.53 million, optional reserves were \$196.29 million and general reserve was recorded at \$853.49 million.

The Arab Bank has doubled its capital during an extraordinary meeting of its general assembly, from JD 44 million (\$62 million) to JD 88 million (\$124 million) by distributing a free bonus share.

USAID sponsors bankers' workshop on micro finance

A BANKERS' Workshop was held on 21 July 1998, at the Marriott Hotel, to introduce new sustainable microfinance techniques to commercial bankers in Amman.

Sustainable microfinance is the practice of making small, commercial rate loans, available to proprietors of small, often single-person businesses. Lack of access to credit is frequently the biggest obstacle to micro-entrepreneurs in expanding their businesses, which generally provide income and employment to the lowest income groups in a given country.

The workshop was the latest in a series of initiatives in sustainable microfinance conducted as part of the AMIR Program, a four-year \$13.4 million program funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The AMIR Program's ultimate objective in this field is the development of a sustainable microfinance industry in Jordan based on commercial funding and sound business practices. Jordanian banks play an indispensable role in achieving that objective.

While the Jordanian banking sector has limited experience with microfinance, commercial banks the world over have successfully moved into microfinance. Banks in countries such as Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, Indonesia and the Philippines have instituted microfinance operations on a commercially sustainable basis by overcoming widely held beliefs that microfinance lending was not a viable banking activity.

Bankers unfamiliar with successful microfinance programs often assume that small loans are risky, expensive to administer and represent a small potential market.

The bankers in the other countries mentioned above, for example, had to be convinced that they could, in fact, build sustainable, market-based microfinance programs if they followed certain new methodologies, generally known as "best practices."

The first step in establishing microfinance lending in any banking community has been to familiarize banks with the "best practice" methodologies which, if followed closely, result in a profitable, diversified portfolio of low risk loans, such as:

- Separate operational units dedicated solely to microfinance.
- Fresh-thinking, well-trained staff dedicated solely to microfinance.
- Short-maturity loans.
- Rapid response to delinquencies.
- Timely, well-designed loan management systems.
- Proactive customer service and aggressive outreach and rapid decision making.

The Bankers' Workshop on 21 July focused closely on the experience of several microfinance programs outside Jordan, including two successful programs from Egypt, one of which has been implemented by a private commercial bank. It also presented the findings of a recent credit demand survey sponsored by the AMIR Program in Amman, Zarqa and Irbid.

A brief outline of the

possible commercial bank programs for Jordan, with technical assistance, training and other assistance from the AMIR Program and other possible sources, was also discussed at the workshop.

By John-Thor Dahlburg

UTRECHT, Netherlands—Europe, a continent stuck in the past, a sort of theme park for tourists with well-preserved castles and quaint customs, might be as for the economy, it must be about as exciting and dynamic as Polaris.

Flat wrong—that was then, and this is now. In mid-1998, as much of once-hot Asia has gone stone cold, Europe's economy is plunging along again nicely and may be on a roll.

Indeed, California's exports to Europe are surging, helping to offset slumping sales to Asia. Stock markets in Paris and Frankfurt, Germany, and other continental cities are setting record after record, consumer confidence has reached historic heights and even unemployment, an endemic social scourge, has dipped recently in the biggest economies, Germany and France.

"Discretionary spending is going up and up," reports Jeroen Sloendregt, 32, a wholesaler in the canal-laced Dutch city of Utrecht who imports wooden back rubbers, massage oil and bath salts from a California manufacturer. "We're going to be one European market, and

that is going to be a huge advantage for us."

In the 15-country trade bloc officially known as the European Union, where a single currency will begin to be phased in next January, specialists forecast average growth of between 2.5 percent and 3 percent this year.

That may not sound like much, but given the EU's \$8 trillion economy (the world's largest, outweighing even America's \$7.8 trillion in gross domestic product), it means adding the approximate wealth of a South Korea in two years.

The Old World's rebound may appear even more spectacular because of Japan's ongoing recession and the deflating of such Asian tigers and dragons as South Korea, Thailand and Indonesia.

Around the time such Asian markets were becoming the darlings of venture capitalists and multinational companies, the European Commission's derogatory term "Euroclerosis"—for Western Europe's seemingly eternal economic torpor—was coined.

"Asia became the fashion. And fashions come and go, don't they?" quipped David Wright, adviser to European Commission President Jacques Delors.

As U.S. Commerce Department official Paul Bucher points out, Europe is still "our largest trading partner as a region." According to a study by the European-American Business Council, a private business group, the trans-Atlantic relationship, although marred occasionally by a headline-grabbing dispute over pasta, canned fruit, movie exports or some other trade squabble, continues to dwarf all others: more than \$800 billion in two-way investment and \$411 billion in trade in 1996, the most recent figures available.

And, although President Clinton's recent trip to China spotlighted that country's potential, the plain fact is that at present, the United States sells more to Belgium and Luxembourg (\$14.1 billion in 1997, according to the Commerce Department) than to China (\$12.8 billion).

And if anything, the woes of many of Asia's economies and Europe's own great ambitions are likely to make U.S.-European trade even more important in the short and medium term, experts say.

"If three years ago, people were ready to assume nothing could go wrong in South Korea or Southeast Asia, they aren't ready to assume that now," said

Minco A. van Heezen
Rotterdam port authority spokesman

Paul E. Atkinson, head of the economic prospects division at the Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Signs of revival in Europe were apparent as early as mid-1996, economists say, but it still has come as a surprise to many.

At California's Trade and Commerce Agency, officials admit having been amazed at first but now believe the trend will continue.

"As Europe recovers and the EU comes together to build a single market, it'll become even more important to us," said Jesus Arredondo, a high-ranking agency official for international trade and investment.

At some California exporters, such as Tender Loving Things in San Leandro, that's already the plan. The 6-year-old company raked up \$6 million in sales last year.

Since February, Sloendregt, the Utrecht-based distributor, has been receiving and shipping the company's signature wooden massage and the rest of TLT's line, including foot cream and bath salts, to retailers in the Netherlands.

cent of TLT exports at present.

"We've already been successful in the Netherlands, in Switzerland, in England," she said. "If we are in the stores, people will buy."

Last year, EU purchases of U.S. products jumped by 10 percent, more than triple the volume to Asia, topping \$140 billion. As 11 of the EU countries prepare

to begin the switch to a shared currency, the euro, on Jan. 1, views are divided on the fall-out for business.

But many believe the resulting economies of scale and price transparency will keep Western Europe plying along nicely, and perhaps even rev up the rhythm.

To make sure American businesses get their share of the action, the Commerce Department last month announced more than a dozen seminars across the United States to dispense advice to entrepreneurs and exporters.

Thirty-five miles southwest of Utrecht, where Europe-bound shipments from Tender Loving Things arrive by sea, there are signs that U.S.-European trade is expanding even more. Last year, stevedores in the North Sea port of Rotterdam, the world's busiest and the main ocean gateway to Europe, handled almost 3.5 million freight containers.

Most of the inbound cargo is hitched to trucks or put on river barges and sent inland to an estimated 380 million consumers in Europe's hinterlands.

This year, Rotterdam's traffic to and from North America is up about 7 percent, estimated Minco A. van Heezen, spokesman for the port authority. And as recession-hit Asian countries spend less abroad, he added, the number of containers being sent back to the region empty is growing. Chemicals once sold to customers in the Far East and Southeast Asia now sit in Rotterdam's tank farms.

"Once Asia has an effect on Europe's economy, it becomes our future, as well," van Heezen said.

lar effects from Asia's crisis. But Japan's recession should hit the United States, which is more dependent on exports to Japan, with greater force.

In the first three months of this year, Germany's economy grew 3.8 percent over the same period in 1997, the largest spurt of the decade. The French rate was almost as high: 3.4 percent. Unemployment, meanwhile, dropped slightly: to just under 3 million people in France and 4.2 million in Germany.

However, some analysts still aren't impressed. "What we're seeing is economics coming out of recession," said Bruce Ballantine, a Scottish economist and senior adviser to the European Policy Center, a Brussels, Belgium-based think tank. "The big question is, has anything changed in terms of fundamentals? The jury is still out."

Some economists believe that to unleash long-term growth, labor markets in France, Germany and some other countries on the continent must be reformed to allow employers greater liberty to hire and fire. The cost of state health insurance, social security and other employer-funded programs, they assert, is too high and makes companies hesitant to hire.

Europe has other problems—for instance, a dearth of venture capital markets where start-ups can secure financing and few fast-growing companies in the aggressive mold of Microsoft and Intel. The euro may remedy some of these shortcomings.

Ballantine, though, thinks the real restraints on an economic boom lie far deeper—in the European psyche.

"In Europe, we don't honor success," said the economist.

In any event, many ordinary Europeans seem to have decided that what the German media has been prudently calling "Aufschwung"—"the upswing"—is real and will be around for a while. An opinion poll published last month found 53 percent of respondents in eight countries—Belgium, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal and Spain—were optimistic about the economic future. That was the first time in memory that optimism outnumbered pessimism.

LA Times-Washington Post

All data provided by ACCESS Tel: 646868 Fax: 646949

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An Egyptian icon

Nobel laureate Mahfouz stirs up hornet's nest

NOBEL laureate Naguib Mahfouz, 87, is a household name in Egypt and the Arab world. The man earned his unique fame even before he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1988. The popularity of Mahfouz has been largely attributed to his modesty as a person and his uniquely realistic style, which brings him closer to the Egyptian people.

For decades Mahfouz was largely seen as an onlooker making his own observations of society through his fiction. It was rare for the Nobel laureate to express his views on Egypt's political course. Millions of readers all over the Arab world were accustomed to enjoying the writings of Naguib Mahfouz without labelling him with any particular attitudes. Until a very recent it was difficult to tell whether Naguib Mahfouz is a Nasserite or a supporter of the pro-Sadat camp.

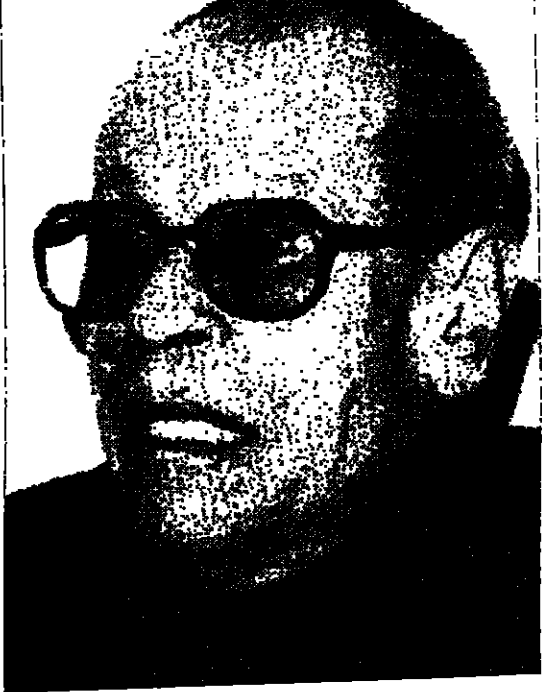
The Egyptians like to classify leading figures as backers of the era of Gamal Abdul Nasser, a key leader of events on July 23, 1952, or of Anwar el-Sadat who led the country to a landmark victory against the Israelis in 1973 and took the initiative to thrash out the first Arab peace treaty with the Jewish state. But classification was far from the minds of the average Egyptian when assessing Mahfouz, the first Arab writer to receive the prestigious

Nobel Prize for Literature.

But a couple of weeks ago Mahfouz broke from his trade-mark incognito persona. Memoirs of the leading writer, presented and recounted by critic Ragaa Al-Nagaah, were partly serialized in a Cairo daily, which strongly criticized the Nasser era for the absence of democratic rule. Mahfouz also expressed his reservations about the nationalisation of the Suez Canal, a step which many see as an unmistakable error of Nasser's rule.

In addition, Mahfouz spoke of those responsible for the 1967 defeat which still affects many Egyptians of different ages.

The era of Anwar Sadat, who took over after Nasser's death in 1970, was not spared Mahfouz's criticism in the memoirs, which have sent shock waves across all classes in Egyptian society. Mahfouz touched on the megalomania which characterized Sadat in



Mahfouz

his later days, and lashed out at the infatuation with the open door policy which has spawned a negative impact on the social life in Egypt today.

Such frankness on the part of Naguib Mahfouz has earned him scathing retorts, both from the Nasserites and the Sadatites. Apparently both camps feared that Mahfouz's popular-

ity might further spoil the image of the two men.

Mahfouz was blamed for underestimating all of the achievements of the July Revolution, showing personal hatred of Nasser and for supporting the physical liquidation of the banned Muslim Brotherhood group during the rule of Nasser.

In reaction, Mahfouz told a Cairo evening daily *Al-Masra* recently that he does not mind the criticisms being leveled at him as long as they eschew abusive language and steer clear of argument for argument's sake.

Challenging the misinterpretation of his memoirs, Mahfouz dismissed the view that he harbours a personal "hatred" against Nasser, saying that none of his novels was banned during Nasser's, unlike under Sadat when his writings found publication difficult.

Mahfouz, also maintained he is not trying to revoke the big deeds of Nasser but maintains his right to mention the nega-

tive strategies adopted during the Nasser era in the 1950s and '60s. The prominent novelist, however, stood firm on his belief that nationalization of the Suez Canal was responsible for many problems which could have been avoided had the political leadership merely waited to restore the strategic waterway by legal means, in the same manner as China and Hong Kong were reunited last year.

In the same interview, Mahfouz did not conceal his antagonism towards the Muslim Brotherhood, who were particularly active before the flare-up of the July Revolution. Mahfouz, however, dismissed claims that he had supported the physical liquidation of Brotherhood activists, though he admitted that he strongly backed the campaign which devastated the organization itself and prevented the spread of their ideas and beliefs.

The exchanges between Naguib Mahfouz and his opponents have been the talk of the town over the past few days. Nevertheless, Egyptians in general have been pleased to gain a closer insight into the political views of the legendary writer. For many, Mahfouz's piercing outlook and forthrightness makes him a keen eyewitness to Egypt's modern history.

Egyptian Gazette



A Palestinian jumps a wall behind the backs of Israeli soldiers as he bypasses a roadblock leading into Jerusalem from the West Bank town of Bethlehem July 19, a day after a member of the militant Islamic group Hamas drove a car-bomb into the center of town. Israel stepped up seriously burned when the van loaded with flammable fluid caught fire but failed to explode.

Reuters

Iran's politically important students show signs of peace

By Robin Wright

TEHRAN—Alarmed at withering revolutionary zeal and enraged that their shah was visiting the United States, about 80 students gathered secretly on the tree-lined mountain paths that overlook Tehran in the fall of 1979 to plot a demonstration at the American Embassy. It was supposed to last three to five days.

Instead, the sit-in became a mass seizure. And by the time it was over 444 days and 52 hostages later, the world's most famous student body had propelled the Iranian Revolution into a new phase, inspired new extremist tactics throughout the region and ignited a rivalry with a superpower that has lasted a generation.

Today, after years out of the limelight, Iran's students are once again taking to Tehran's streets. Once again, the goal is to correct the revolution's course. And once again, dealings with the United States are a part of it. This time, however, the energy is largely channeled in a different direction.

The student movement is now trying to create a peaceful space with emphasis on dialogue and the rule of law. We want to create a country with freedoms for everyone, not just one sector, and a society without harshness," said Ali Reza Taheri, one of six leaders of the influential Office for Islamic Unity, this country's largest and most significant student group. "We want to correct the mistakes of the past, not repeat them," he added.

More than any other sector of society, Iran's students are now redefining the revolution. Mohammad Khatami, the new reformist president, may be the symbol of change to the outside world. But at home he is merely the byproduct of a political phenomenon spearheaded by Iran's youth, who today account for about 65 percent of Iran's 63 million people.

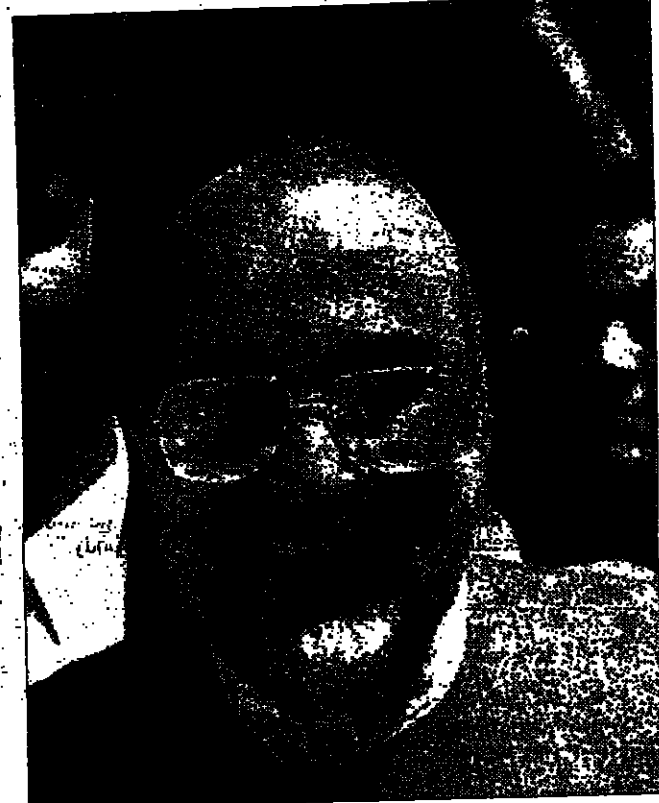
Iran's young, who began voting at age 15, were the biggest factor in Khatami's election victory last year. And their demonstrations—or mere plans for public rallies—have become the front line of Iran's political battlefield between reformers and conservatives.

The Office for Islamic Unity recently invited former Interior Minister Abdollah Nouri to give a speech at Tehran University that turned into a raucous rally—and potentially a political turning point. Nouri, a leading reformer who was impeached last month by the conservative-dominated Parliament, told a cheering throng of students that the campaign to force him out of power had exposed the conservatives' goal of undoing the new government by blocking reform.

"After the vote of no confidence, everything has become clear about the position of the majority of deputies against the government and Khatami," he said to roaring chants of support.

Nouri's authorization of several earlier student rallies was one reason that 31 members of Parliament called for his impeachment. But in a defiant twist, within an hour of the no-confidence vote, Khatami appointed Nouri vice president for political development and social affairs—code words in Iran for reform.

The student protests have picked up steam, drawing dramatic responses and framing the country's political debate. On March 2, about 3,000 students rallied at Tehran Univer-



Khatami

sity's leafy downtown campus to challenge the right of the Council of Guardians, a religious oversight committee, to vet political candidates' qualifications on moral and ideological grounds. The process eliminated several pro-Khatami candidates for March 13 parliamentary elections—as well as thousands of candidates in national and provincial polls over the past decade.

Demonstrators charged conservative "monopolists" with trying to "appoint people to parliament" rather than letting them be freely elected. In rhythmic unison, they repeatedly shouted, "Hail freedom!" Religious thugs with Ansar-e Hezbollah, or Helpers of the Party of God, attacked the crowd. Riot police eventually broke up the clashes, which left dozens injured.

The Office for Islamic Unity planned a major protest April 14 against the arrest of Iran's reformist mayor, Gholam-Hossein Karbaschi, who was also the president's campaign manager.

"We don't support Karbaschi because he is the mayor. Before being a mayor he is a citizen, and we object to the violation of a citizen's rights," said Maysam Saedi, one of the group's leaders. In part to prevent the rally and its potential consequences, a behind-the-scenes deal was struck to release Karbaschi from prison until his trial. Despite the last-minute cancellation, hundreds of students still turned out. Again, Ansar militants attacked. Again, clashes ensued.

Chanting and waving pictures of the turbaned president, tens of thousands of students turned out at Tehran University on May 23 to mark the first anniversary of Khatami's election. It also became a forum for condemning conservatives and demanding further reforms. One group of demonstrators shouted for the resignation of Iran's chief Supreme Court justice, who had ordered the Tehran mayor's arrest.

Two days later, 2,000 turned out at a rally sponsored by the Union of Islamic Students and Graduates to demand that women and non-clerics be allowed to run this fall for the powerful Assembly of Experts, the group of 83 clergy members who select and can dismiss Iran's supreme religious

leader. "The purpose of our revolution was to allow us to breathe in a free atmosphere," Union leader Heshmatollah Tabarzadi told the crowd in Tulip Park. Ansar thugs responded by pelting the platform with rocks and beating students. Police used tear gas to disperse the crowd.

"Students are the engine of change in Iran," said Tehran University political scientist Nasser Hadian. "Their sheer numbers give them more weight than in other societies." Student power has now put conservatives on the defensive. Parliament, which is dominated by conservatives, recently took up legislation raising the voting age to 18. Khatami's victory has ignited fear that they will be the next to go in elections in 2000.

Three days after the Khatami anniversary rally, conservative clerics in the religious center of Qom organized their own rally to protest the behavior of pro-democracy students.

State television, run by the brother of a noted conservative politician, now calls for "tranquility" and "composure" whenever word of another student rally spreads. And recent graffiti on Vahd-Asr Avenue, the main boulevard running from Tehran's northern mountains to the southern desert, charges students with "fomenting turmoil."

The student political spectrum covers groups of all sizes and with varying agendas. Headquartered in a rundown house off a Tehran back street, the Office for Islamic Unity draws together members from all of Iran's colleges, universities and technical institutes.

It is also the reconfigured descendant of the Students of the Imam's Line, the group that seized the US Embassy. But times are distinctly different now, students say.

"We still have the goals of the revolution. But today we don't need to have such revolutionary behavior," said Taheri, who is studying engineering. "Our decisions and actions are based on the situation of the time, and today we are looking for peace and security, worldwide democracy and real human rights for all people."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Survivor recalls horror of bombing, pain of recovery

By Ann LoLardo

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM—When Shoshana Katsav learned of Sunday's foiled terrorist attack in downtown Jerusalem, the horror of the suicide bombing she survived a year ago tore through her.

Screams filled her head. The mayhem that followed the twin explosions in Jerusalem's main outdoor market flashed before her eyes.

Sixteen people died in the attack last July 30; 70 others were wounded. Katsav, who was leaving the Mahaneh Yehuda market when the two suicide bombers struck, was one of the lucky ones—but barely.

She spent 5 months in the hospital, and the rest of the last year as an outpatient learning to regain use of her battered and burned body. Monday, she finished her last physical therapy session.

"Everything came rushing back to me, the screams, the destruction, all the pictures," said the 45-year-old mother of four as she sat in the physical therapy wing of the Hadassah Hospital at Mount Scopus. "I was very emotional."

When rescue workers pulled her from the smoldering debris of the market bombing last year, Katsav had a fractured right arm, injuries to her head, second and third-degree burns on her face, chest, back and legs. The initial prognosis was not good.

"Ninety-nine percent of me was already up in heaven, and only 1 percent was on the ground," Katsav said, recalling her doctor's assessment. "Only now people are starting to tell me what happened because I'm not ready to hear it all."

When Katsav thinks about the two suicide bombers, she says quietly, "I hate the people

who did this, but that doesn't include all Arabs. One of the doctors who took care of me was an Arab. He did everything to save me."

Dr Salah Odallah is the chief anesthetist and co-director of the intensive care unit at Jerusalem's Shaare Zedek Medical Center. For the first three months of her recovery, she was in a medical-induced coma because of the severity of her injuries.

Odallah, 38, who was born in Arab East Jerusalem, said Katsav couldn't breathe on her own initially and was sedated and placed on a mechanical ventilator.

Katsav underwent several surgical procedures. Once her condition stabilized, she was taken off the sedatives, he said.

Odallah spoke several times a day with Katsav's family, detailing her treatment and condition. "I told them if she is

still alive after three or four days, the prognosis would be better. The very difficult days were the first ones," he said.

Odallah made arrangements to have Katsav's 13-year-old daughter, Hadassah, who also was injured in the market bombing, transferred to Shaare Zedek so the family could keep watch over them both.

From the start, Odallah said the Katsav family knew he was an Arab. It never was an issue, he said.

"As a physician you cannot have two personalities, to treat patients" and sympathize with terrorists, he said. "To agree with the killers, it is impossible. You cannot continue to be a physician."

Odallah, who has worked at Shaare Zedek for 14 years, and the Katsav family have stayed in touch as Shoshana Katsav underwent intensive physical and occupational therapy.

Katsav considers the last

year of her life a "disaster." She had to learn to walk again, bathe and dress herself. She has regained minimal use of her right arm.

"What I wanted to stress is that it was a combination of her physical wounds and post-traumatic stress syndrome," said Tami Yosha, the occupational therapist who worked with Katsav. "The rehabilitation takes longer when it involves an emotional wound."

As part of her recovery, Katsav must wear a special elastic undergarment known as a "pressure gown" to help soften and thin her burn scars. Yosha said. She may have to wear the gown for up to two years.

"My family kept me together. The staffs of the hospitals, they are amazing, fantastic people. They gave me a lot of strength," she said.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service



Papua New Guinean Prime Minister Bill Skate checks an injury boy in the village of Sissamo in northwestern Papua New Guinea July 21, following a tidal wave on July 17. More than 1,200 people are confirmed dead with 6,000 unaccounted for after three tidal waves destroyed villages on Papua New Guinea's remote northwest coast, washing hundreds of people away, burying others alive and leaving thousands homeless.

Reuters

Nigerians in desire for leaders

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Nigerians united in desire for new leadership

By Ann M. Simmons

KADUNA, Nigeria—To hear southern Nigerians tell it, the people from the North in this populous West African nation are to blame for the military's long stranglehold on power. Generals from the mostly conservative Hausa and Fulani northern clans have held tightly to control, southerners maintain, draining the South of its oil wealth and other resources and giving nothing in return to its dominant Yoruba group and ethnic minorities.

But in Kaduna, once the country's northern seat of power under British colonialism, the tale is one of poverty, illiteracy and complaints about past regimes led by northern native sons who have neglected those sharing their heritage, language and predominantly Muslim faith.

As Nigerians braced themselves Sunday for the country's latest military regime to announce its plans for transition to democracy and civilian rule, many northerners were openly declaring their hopes that the army would make way for civilian—and even southern—leadership.

"The people in the North can't see any gain from having a northern president," said Abdulkadir Balarabe Musa, former governor of Kaduna state. "By independence in 1960, the North was at least 10 years behind the South in educational development. Now in 1998, the North is at least 40 years behind the South. It is the responsibility of northern leadership that has created that gap. Let the presidency go to the South."

So when Nigerian dictator Gen. Sani Abacha, a northern Muslim, died last month of an apparent heart attack, Nigerian scholars, analysts and community leaders here say northerners—more than anyone—heaved a sigh of relief.

"Abacha was not popular here, but the philosophy is slightly more conservative (in the North) because of the religious background; that made it slightly difficult to mobilize people to fight the regime," said Femi Osofisan, a Lagos-based playwright and Kaduna-based Human Rights Monitor, adding that the late general's core support came primarily from his own security service and a small clique of northern elites. "The death of Abacha was seen as divine intervention. People felt relieved because the opinion leaders here thought he was leading the country to the brink."

The transition program of Gen. Abdulsalam Abubakar, Nigeria's latest northern military leader, is expected to resolve the five years of political turmoil since the military's annulment of 1993 elections that popular southern tycoon Moshhood Abiola was widely presumed to have won.

The preliminary vote count showed Abiola swept the North, including Abacha's hometown, Kano. But the business mogul was jailed in 1994 for declaring himself president and died of a heart attack this month while still in custody.

Government employees in Kaduna state, where an estimated 80 percent of the 5.5 million people live below the poverty line, say their lives

already had reached the precipice before Abacha's death.

Last year, 22,000 government workers were fired for going on strike in demand of better wages, and several labor leaders were jailed. Production at Kaduna's oil refinery, one of four in the country and once the town's main employer, has collapsed, along with business at scores of other factories and textile manufacturing companies.

Unemployment in this grimy, heavily polluted city is reported by numerous sources to be at about 90 percent. All that Kaduna can boast of, residents say with scorn, is its host of military institutions.

The Nigerian Defense Academy, Army Command and Staff College, Army School of Infantry, military air base and the Nigerian army's 1 Mechanized Division are all in Kaduna.

"(Average) northerners haven't benefited at all from a northerner being in power," said Abdulkarim Ibrahim, Kaduna state chairman of the National Public Service Negotiating Councils, a liaison group between the government and laborers. "The military leaders only take care of themselves, their wives and their family. Workers have absolutely suffered. Military people are looters. They have spoiled the economy of this country."

The highest monthly salary for a state government job is just over \$100. The cash crunch has made it difficult for small traders such as Hussein Jibril to earn a living because would-be customers cannot afford their products. Jibril, who sells plantains from a stall on a busy thoroughfare in Kaduna, believes his livelihood has gone from bad to worse under military rule. His daily income has dropped during the past five years from \$24 to as little as \$6.

"We expected Abacha to do for the entire country, not just for the North," said Jibril, 30, who is from the late general's hometown. "But as far as I'm concerned, he didn't do anything for anybody."

Widespread illiteracy also has plagued the North, traditionally a feudal society and long considered the most backward region of this country of 104 million. The northerners' Islamic faith made them reluctant to embrace the education being offered by the Christian missionaries who flooded the South before independence.

Little was done by past leaders to improve the nation's educational system, allowing the military to keep its grip on power but leaving the imbalance between North and South in place. Now northerners increasingly are joining pro-democracy and opposition leaders, most of whom are from the South, in agitating for the military to surrender power.

"Generally, people are fed up with the military," said Yahaya Mahmood, a former high court judge of Kaduna state. "Each (leader) has brought some of his friends to help him steal our money."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service



Jerash Festival Of Culture & Arts

July 22 - August 10 1998

International Participation



South Theatre

26.27/7/98
8:30 PM.

• Mazowsze Troupe
Poland



Sound & Light Theatre

8:30 PM.

• Tales of Grimm Brothers
Poland 27 - 30/7/98
• ShenZhen Children's Art Ensemble
China 4 - 7/8/98



North Theatre

8:30 PM.

• Ibn Baya Andalusian Troupe
Spain 25.26/7/98
• Ana Lise Bernsten (Opera Singer)
Norway 27.28/7/98



Forum

7:00 - 11:00 PM.

• Five Star Circus
UK / 23/7 - 7/8/98
• Sakumoh Troupe
Zimbabwe / 23/7 - 7/8/98
• Huskvarna Folkdancelag
Sweden 23-26/7/98
• Family International Troupe
23 - 26/7/98
• Sofia - Six - Troupe
Bulgaria / 27 - 31/7/98
• Izmir Folklore
Turkey / 31/7 - 3/8/98



Artemis Steps

8:30 PM.

23.24/7/98
• O.S.C. - Twelfth Night Play
UK

Street Of Columns

• Artist Hiroko Emada
Theater Designer & Artist / Japan



Mazowsze Troupe - Poland

This is one of the top two troupes of its kind in the whole world. The other troupe is Moiseyev in Russia.

Mazowsze consists of at least 75 members who dance, sing and play music. It was established in 1948 and since then gave over 5600 performances at home and abroad with attendance of (15) million spectators. They performed in (42) countries of the world. Mazowsze performs folklore which is artistically transformed and stylized to be both modern and historical. To attend Mazowsze's shows you live spiritual moments with the Polish nation.



Ana - Lise Bernsten (Opera Singer) - Norway

Ana - Lise began her career in the early eighties in the Swedish Royal Opera House in Stockholm. In 1988 she presented an important work named (Torandout) which was a turning point towards establishing her reputation. At an age when other singers think to quit, Ana - Lise seems that she just began her career. Famous in Europe, and very artistic, Jordanian audience will have a chance to see her performance in Jerash.



Prague Philharmonic Orchestra - Czech Republic

In the 45 years or so of its life, this orchestra had established a reputation of great high-level performances in the 80 concerts or more performed yearly by the orchestra. Prague Orchestra plays a variety of classical music like the Baroque, Mozart, Beethoven, Hyden and others. It consists of a part of string instruments, wind and brass of flutes horns and

trumpets plus timpani. The orchestra had visited many countries all over the world. This is the first time they will be in Jordan.



The Tales of Grimm Brothers - Poland

"The Tales of Grimm Brothers" is a play of a modern theatrical form tries to transmit to the viewers the most serious truths hidden in classical tales.

The three actors using simple requisites, changing elements of their costumes and of the curtain create different stories. Each of the tales ("The Queen and the Player" "The Goat, Little Goats and the Wolf" "Little Red Riding Hood") has its own climate, from lyric to live and funny. Dramatic situations built by simple stage actions inspire the imagination and activeness of young viewers. During the show the actors enter in close contact with the public.



The Family International Troupe

It is a Commonwealth independent volunteer community who believes that sincere and outgoing love to fellowman can provide the answers to the complex problems of society today. They are also known as "Heart to Heart" and have previously participated in Jerash Festival of Culture and Arts in 1994, 1996 & 1997. Music plays a very important part in their

work and activities, and is a fundamental form of communication in the world today as through music people have unity, harmony and love, as well as friendship. Besides entertainment, they purpose is to convey a positive message, all their songs are full of meaning, with catchy tunes and beautiful melodies, and they have had a tremendous response from audiences in many countries for their lively and enthusiastic performances. The group has performed in concerts in many corners of the world from the Far East to India and the Middle East and Palestine.



Artist Hiroko Emada (Theater Designer and Artist) - Japan

Working with paper, the Japanese Artist Hiroko builds up her magnificent world. She inserts her topics and creates which surprise both children and adults. Hiroko was born in Tokyo and studied at the University of Tokyo for Arts and Design.

Then she completed her study at Slid School of Fine Arts at London University. The British Art Critique describes her talent as a new and impressive one. She could release this talent up to the utmost benefiting from her potentials and creativity based on new alternatives and ideas. Now, Hiroko is engaged in many fields related to her specialization. In addition to Information and lectures at some universities, she is active holding exhibitions at cultural and arts centers all over the world. She joins certain theaters as a professional designer. This year, Hiroko Emada will be adding a special flavor to Jerash activities where two different world encounter- these are the world of the stone and the world of paper. This is Jerash with its poles, tiles and papers of the Artist built like instant dreams.



IBN BAYA MUSICAL Ensemble-Spain

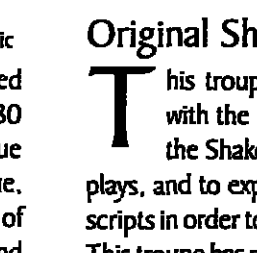
Ibn BAYA Ensemble is made up of Spanish and Moroccan musicians.

Named after the Arab Andalusian musician and Philosopher Ibn Baya, the ensemble focuses on the Andalusian culture as a culture that represents the interaction between Arabs and Europeans. The Ensemble has developed instrumental techniques in this model of music.



City Ballet of London - uk

It is one of the great Ballet troupes in the world. Its name was London City ballet and when Harold king's Company, London City Ballet collapsed in June 1996, The City Ballet of London was established instead. In Jerash this year this troupe will perform Tchaikovsky's musical "Sleeping Beauty".



Original Shakespeare Company - uk

This troupe is an established professional theater company with the objectives of discovering, exploring and promoting the Shakespearean method of producing and presenting the plays, and to explore the value of using the first folio text and Cue-scripts in order to discover the clues given to the actors by the author. This troupe has participated in Jerash for the last two years. In this year it will perform the Twelfth Night by Shakespeare.



Sakumoh Dance - Zimbabwe

Sakumoh is a community dance project consisting of both male and female traditional dancers and drummers whose aim is to promote an awareness of the African Culture a variety of art activities.

Although it is based in London but it was named after Sakumoh River in the greater Accra region of Ghana.

The Troupe is specialized in: Dancing and drumming, story telling, singing, mask and costume making and design.



ShenZhen Children's Art Ensemble of China

This troupe consists of the children of Nantou Primary School, ShenZhen.

The program performed by the children, is composed of Chinese folk dance, music and Chinese kongfu. This troupe has been abroad for few times.

Mladost Folklore Troupe - Slovakia

This year, Jerash will be receiving this Group coming from Slovakia, presenting the spirit of Eastern Europe. Slovaks with their musical instruments and expressive costumes, dances and singing will be with us this year giving us the chance to explore their distinguished arts. The Group was established in 1965. It has fifty members who perform singing, playing music and dancing. The Group gathers the colors of its spectrum from all over the country to produce a rich folklore momentum for Jerash audience this year. Having visited different countries such as Greece, Turkey, Hungary, Portugal, Brazil, Italy and France, Jerash will be their latest stop.



Five Star Circus - uk

Five Star Circus returns to Jerash with an all star new line up of the best of British circus performers. They have travelled the world with their comedy magic show, amazing things happen and disappear, but don't ask them how it's done... they don't know!

TICKETS ARE AVAILABLE AT THESE OUT LETS

* Jerash Festival Site
* Reservation Bureau of 3 tourist transport Co's
(Alpha Petra Jeti Jeti (Abdoh) Tel. 5604146
Selling - buses meeting point
Departure time from 4:30-6:30 p.m.

* McDonalds, A.Goshah str. Tel: 5859801
Selling - buses meeting point
Departure time from 4:30-6:30 p.m.
* Music Box:
7 in circle, Tel. 5820460 - Swehah, Tel. 5826168
- C. Town, Tel. 5814129 - Big Bear stores, Tel. 716678

* Jerusalem Hotel, Tel. 5151121
* Qasr Al-Shoq Coffee Shop
Arabia, Tel. 5516811
* Green Meadows Tourism
Gardens str. Tel. 5698184

* Abdoun for tourism
Abdoun circle, Tel. 5029804 - 5925304
* Tyche Hotel, Tel. 5607114
* Nakhleh for travel & tourism
Zarka, Tel. 901910 - 906900

The Star
Jordan's political, economic
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AROUND TOWN

Honoring The Winners

A RECEPTION was held last week at the French Embassy for the winners of the competition 'Let's go to France 98.'

The French ambassador made a speech commending the strong relationship between the two countries and expressed his gratitude to the Jordanian people who supported France during their World Cup victory. He then presented the gifts to the winners.

Also present at the reception were the Minister of Tourism, the Vice-President of the Jordanian Football Association, and media representatives.



Samia Al Zaru seeks to bring art closer to the people

By Ghassan Joha
Special to The Star

All works of art should aim to involve the observer in the art process as a whole. Samia Zaru, one of the most prominent Jordanian artists today, firmly believes this. Consequently her work succeeds in bringing enjoyment, understanding and learning to her people.

When you enter her art workshop near the Wasfi Etal Square (2nd circle), you immediately sense her work and the message she is trying to convey. Mrs Zaru, born in Nablus, graduated from the American University in Beirut and is a post graduate from the Corcoran Art Gallery and the American University in Washington.

Her works vary from acrylics to oils on canvas, sculptures in metal, as well as weaving and collages, all inspired by her homeland and the suffering of her people. A lot of Zaru's works are embroidery collages of Palestinian themes painted on tent canvas. They have been shown in over 40 exhibitions around the world, and have earned her gold and silver medals, along with many awards from Kuwait, Egypt, Iraq and other countries.

"When someone looks at a work of art, his impressions are formed according to what moves their emotions," Zaru told *The Star*. Art works which are site specific in time can become a landmark. An example of this, is Mrs Zaru's metal sculpture of 'The Family' located near the Haya Cultural Centre. "Such local art works should become a trend, as they convey a local spirit in time and space," she adds. The three meter sculpture has stood there since 1974, and it has become a symbol of motherhood, situated



Zaru

appropriately near a children's centre.

She states that Amman has become congested with buildings, and that parks and public gardens are vital to provide breathing space. "It would be excellent if they could be landscaped with appropriate art work from local artists and sculptors—subject to selection process by a jury (or committee) interested in Art," she continues.

Zaru sees a need to elevate and develop art aesthetically by surrounding the observer with

beautiful things—by beautifying empty spaces with sculpture. In 1989, Mrs Zaru participated in the 'Tents and Stones' exhibition (undertaken by the UN Information Service), which told the story of the Intifada. Neery Melkoulani (from the UNIS) gave us her impressions of the exhibition. "The captivating colors, forms and content of her works distinguish her among the 600 artists participating in the biannual exhibition. I find Zaru's art to be timely, pertinent and engaging. And I believe such an exhibition should break cultural and other boundaries, and encourage a long overdue dialogue."

Art works must be of high quality, contain a spirit of the time, and have a local touch identifiable to its viewers. "I am not preaching the use of heritage symbols as a means to affirm this identity. This is already done in posters. Anyway, art works are pieces of art which speak for themselves," Mrs Zaru said. "This can't be achieved unless there is a great degree of involvement and belonging—better known as honesty."

"We don't need to copy other people's works of art. The art direction in Jordan is constantly developing and adapting, which is a healthy sign, and this is all happening without a national art school or movement," Mrs



Zaru points out. Looking for a common school of thought in the region, she praises Islamic Art—a school of thought that introduced the earliest forms of abstract art, leading towards the



earliest forms of abstract art, leading towards the 11th and 12th century. "We need to search for an art form which will merge our views of Arab culture in a modern context. This could then be defined regionally and nationally," said Mrs Zaru. She defines the artist as one who designs, creates and organizes the elements of their art using imaginative leaps. Using this as the basis for her career as an artist, Mrs Zaru always aims to diversify from the norm in painting, sculpting, and designing. "The artist must include everything." As for the position of the local artist, she made a hopeful call. "Local artists need to participate and share in beautifying their country, and we all need to support them spiritually and financially. They have a right to present their art perspectives to the people."

Chinese art exhibition Dragons and porcelain temples

By Star Staff Writer

VISITORS to the Chinese art exhibition, opened last week in the City Hall in Ras Alain by the Chinese Ambassador, will be deeply impressed with the collection of paintings and artifacts on show, both the ancient and modern.

There are many examples of traditional Chinese culture—exhibits of dragons and temples made of porcelain, and vivid paintings of Chinese gods.

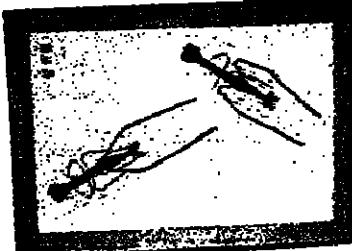
Interestingly, many of these exhibits are made with a special Chinese sticky material called 'Allik' which acts as a guard against deterioration from humidity.

The exhibition is rich and presents to a discerning public a rare glimpse of Chinese culture. For example, one sketch, entitled 'Red Palace', from the novel of the same name, depicts a famous love

story of two people from different aristocratic families in the Qing dynasty (1644-1911). This story has an enduring place in Chinese culture, and has been acted out on stage, and serialised on television. It has featured as a theme in innumerable works of art throughout the centuries, so is particularly appropriate to this exhibition of ancient and modern.

Also on display, large bells, called 'Blang Chong' make you feel you are inside an old temple. These bells were traditionally used in war and in temples, and have greatly influenced the development of Chinese musical instruments.

Finally, insects and animals, delicately crafted in bronze and iron, and paintings of great Chinese cities such as Shanghai, and the Potala Palace in Tibet are also among the many varied pieces on show, and the overall impression is of an exhibition offering a well-rounded glimpse of Chinese art and culture, past and present.

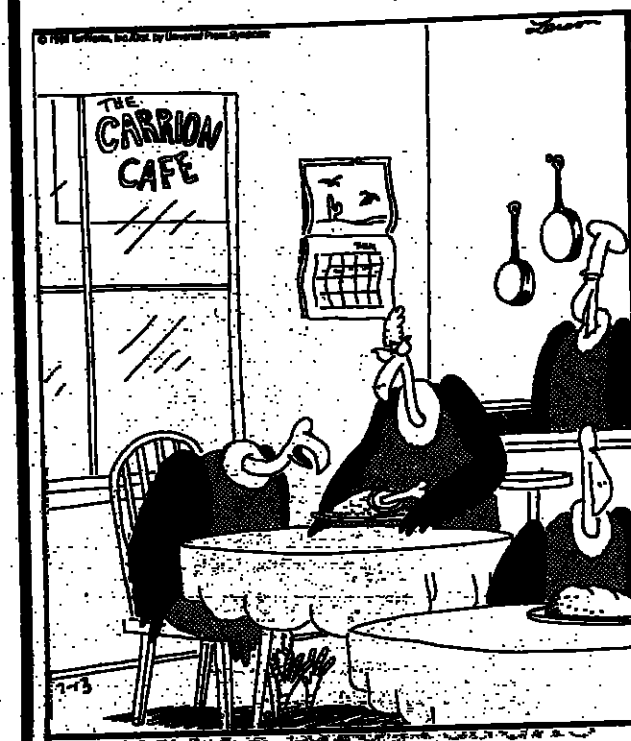


THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



The townsfolk all stopped and stared; they didn't know the tall stranger who rode calmly through their midst, but they did know the reign of terror had ended.



"Sausages... this doesn't look spoiled."

AGENDA

Exhibitions

■ "The small pictures exhibition" is taking place at the Orpholy Gallery at Um Uthman. It ends on 25 July.

■ The Jerash Festival for Arts and Culture starts on 22 July. Its ends on 8 August.

■ An exhibition of Chinese art continues at the City Hall in Ras Alain till 26 July.

■ Paintings of 18 artists from Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Palestine and Lebanon in Al Mashriq gallery, Shimisani, continues until 1 November.

■ A Sports and Culture Exhibition at the French Culture Center in Jabal Luweibdeh continues until 30 July.

Films

■ Honey, We Shrunk Ourselves, at the American Center on 17 July at 5 pm.

■ Also at the American Center is Peter Pan, the famous cartoon film by Disney. It will be shown on 24 July at 5 pm.

The Jerash Festival

■ Thursday 23 July: Singer Diana Haddad from Lebanon at the South Theater (performing on three nights); Oud player Nasir Shama at the North Theater (three nights); OSC from the

UK performing Shakespeare's Twelfth Night at Artemis (three nights); Cinderella at Aound and Light Theater (four nights).

■ Saturday 25 July: Spanish Ibn Baya Andalusian at North Theater (two nights); local Jaffra Troupe at Artemis Theater.

■ Sunday 24: Mazowsze Song and Dance from Poland at South Theater (two nights); Irbid Troupe of Arabic music.

■ Monday 27 July: Anais Bersten, opera singer from Norway at North Theater (two nights); Tales of Grimm Brothers by Teatr Lalik from Poland at the Sound and Light Theater (four nights).

■ Tuesday 28 July: Lebanese singer Marcel Khalifeh at the South Theater (two nights); Amman National University Troupe at the Artemis Theater.

■ Wednesday 29 July: Oriental Dream, a fashion show by Hanna Sadeq at the North Theater; Philadelphia University Troupe at the Artemis Theater. At the Forum, local, Arab and international troupes are performing throughout the week.

The Star
Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly
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Wonder drug brings back 'spice of life'

AMMAN (Star)—Viagra is hitting the world by storm. Since its approval in the United States by the US Food and Drug Administration last March, Viagra has exploded onto news headlines and our TV screens.

Thanks to Viagra, the once almost taboo subject of male impotence is now blaring across US living rooms, supermarkets and pharmacies in an unprecedented manner.

Under the name Viagra and everybody knows about it. With its high media profile, Viagra has become the most well known drug in the world. Everybody is talking about the drug that claims to be the proverbial 'fountain of youth', sexually speaking.

Now, in Jordan and Egypt, and indeed across the region, media hype is making Viagra a household name.

In the US, the launch of Vi-

agra could arguably be the most successful drug launch in history. The product generated 592,000 prescriptions in its first month on the market. To make a comparison, the oral diabetes agent Rezulin generated just 78,000 prescriptions in April 1997, the lipid lowering drug Lipitor generated 139,000 prescriptions in March 1997, and the obesity drug Redux attained 153,000 prescriptions in June 1996.

On average, Viagra cost consumers about \$9.30 per tablet in April, and Scott-Levin's *Source Prescription Audit Weekly* data shows nearly 1.4 million Viagra prescriptions were dispensed since the launch to the week ending May 15, 1998.

These figures are not surprising as there are 30 million men in the United States suffering from impotence and this medication has the potential to sub-

stantially change their lives. So far, Viagra does indeed seem to be all it is cracked up to be for the 1 in 4 men over 50 (or indeed any man) suffer erectile dysfunction.

Viagra has a funny history. It was originally being studied for use as a drug for high blood pressure and angina. It wasn't terribly successful, but when men refused to give their samples back, researchers suspected they were on to something!

The original patent was filed in 1991 for Sildenafil citrate, (Viagra). When scientists realized it could also improve the performance of men suffering from impotence by increasing the blood flow to the male organ, they filed for another patent. The third and final patent for the drug now named Viagra was issued June 1997.

The American pharmaceutical company manufacturing the drug is reaping the rewards. Shares of Pfizer Inc have skyrocketed on Wall Street. Its second quarter profits are \$628 million.

The wonder drug, launched in the United States in April, has already earned \$411 million in the second quarter of 1998 for the New York-based drug company, and is expected to make \$1 billion in its first year. The drug is due to be approved for use in Britain and other European countries later in the year.

However, about 30 Viagra users have died in the US—and there have been further fatalities across the globe—since the drug hit the market. The FDA currently state that 30 fatalities is statistically insignificant in relation to sales. However, more research will need to be done if fatalities continue to increase worldwide. Watch this space. ■

The downside of Viagra

By Christine Gorman

VIAGRA MAY help millions of men—and even some women—but it is not a sexual cure-all. It is not an aphrodisiac; it will not work in the absence of desire. Nor will it make improve the sexual performance of a normal, healthy man. Neither will it save a marriage. In fact, there are some risks to taking Viagra that everyone, whether sexually dysfunctional or merely dissatisfied, should consider before rushing to the pharmacy.

Headaches: One out of 10 men in the clinical trials developed blinding headaches that grew more severe at higher doses.

Seeing Blue: Because the eyes con-

tain an enzyme similar to the one on which Viagra works in the male member, about 3 percent of users develop temporary vision problems, ranging from blurred vision to a blue or green halo effect.

Blackouts: Viagra can trigger sudden drops in blood pressure, and there is a risk that men who take it in combination with nitroglycerin or other antihypertensive drugs could faint or go into shock.

Priapism: Although it never happened in the trials, there is a theoretical risk that men with sickle-cell anemia, leukemia or arterial inflammation could, when taking Viagra, develop priapism. Untreated, priapism can lead to tissue damage and even impotence.

Coital coconuts: Sometimes impotence is an early indicator of heart disease, diabetes and some types of cancer. Taking Viagra could mask these life-threatening conditions. Men with coronary problems who have not had sex for many years should consult their doctors before putting too much strain on a weakened heart.

Abuse: Nobody knows the long-term effects of large doses of Viagra, especially on men who take it for the wrong reason. Although it is a relatively safe drug, there is a possibility that users will become psychologically dependent on it, unable to achieve an erection without Viagra. ■

For 8 hours a day, she can see her world



Angela Williams, 38, legally blind except for the eight hours she can wear special contacts, plays with her son Trevin, 10, in their Beltsville, Md., home. He nominated her in a contest honoring mothers—and she won. Photo by Carol Guzy

By Patrice Gaines

WASHINGTON—The clock starts ticking as soon as Angela Williams puts in her contacts. She has eight hours. Eight hours to cook her son's breakfast, lay out his clothes, take him to track practice or to the barbershop, mow the lawn, go to the doctor, paint her nails, go to the mall, complete errands in the car.

Williams, 38, is one of an estimated 135,000 people in this country with Keratoconus (KC), a disease of the cornea that interferes with vision. KC can't be cured and its cause is not known, but in some cases, such as Williams', a person can see with special contact lenses.

The problem is, her eyes can tolerate the contacts for only eight hours a day.

So her life is divided into two worlds. One is filled with bright light and distinct colors, faces, books by black authors, a kitchen accented with potholders, and curtains decorated with strawberries. The other has only shadows, flashes of light and blurs of color.

People who know her from her son's school, or the couples who go out with her and her husband, know a woman who drives a sport utility vehicle and puts together the family's tent at track meets. They don't know the Angela (pronounced Angela) who has to hold a printed page at the tip of her nose to read it and who can't see her 10-year-old son's face when he is standing next to her.

Early in her 21-year journey from bad eyesight to becoming legally blind, she stopped telling people about her condition. As a young adult, she was ashamed. Now, as a wife and mother, she has come to think of KC as part of her private life. It's so private to her husband that he would not participate in this article and did not want to be identified. Williams is Angela's maiden name.

Perhaps she would have continued with her secret, too, if it were not for her son, Trevin. Joyner syndicated radio show, nominating her for "The Thursday Morning Mom" contest.

In 8 hours my mom can clean our house, cook our dinner, volunteer at my school, help me with my homework, go to church, sing in the choir, take me to track practice and to my mees, Trevin wrote. "She takes me to museums, the zoo, Jeepers, she gave me a Easter egg hunt outside, she even took me to see Stone Cold Steve Austin at the WWF. She is a lot of fun."

Trevin continued, "After she makes her contacts off, she can't see my face clearly, she can't play games—but she can wrestle with me. My mom always tells me to read and learn all I can read and learn because I am her sight after she takes off her contacts."

Williams won, and besides the admiration of the deejays, she received \$500 and a 15-day Greyhound bus pass for two.

Inside the family's two-story Beltsville, Md., home, all the walls are colorful, since Williams sees better when the background is not white. The kitchen is spruce green. The basement is blue-gray. She doesn't allow clutter, because she can't afford to trip over

anything and she must memorize where everything is.

"If I'm having a lazy day, I won't put on my contacts, because I know my house and I know where everything is," she said, sitting in the kitchen, never looking at the person she is addressing—one of the few signs that she can't see her visitor's face.

On a recent morning, Williams had to call the insurance company again. Though she has dealt with KC for two decades, she continually has to explain that her contacts are not for cosmetic purposes.

On this day, most of Williams' chores were at home, so she didn't bother with the contacts, not even to iron.

mally round cornea is cone-shaped. Williams was ecstatic to know that there was a name for what she had and that there were doctors who had studied the disease. Today, Lemp is still her doctor.

By this time, Williams had given up all extracurricular activities and stayed at home a lot, hiding her vision problems. She even gave up singing. "It got too frightening, going out on stage without being able to see," Williams said.

She moved to Washington in 1980 and eventually went to work for the telephone company. She got married, had Trevin and found she needed to wear her contacts more often to take care of him. But she couldn't. "After I had them in for a certain amount of time, it started feeling like there was dirt or something in my eyes," Williams said. "And that's still the case."

In 1994, her sight became so bad she had to give up her job as a maintenance administrator at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) at the Goddard Space Flight Center. At work, she had to track meets, where there may be five hours between Trevin's runs. Williams takes out the contacts and rests in the family tent. She puts them back in in time to videotape her son's runs. It bothers her that she can't cheer for all the children.

"I know people wonder, but I have to save my eyesight for my son," Williams said. "Still, she doesn't explain to the other parents. Her good friend Tammy said she has known Williams for three years but learned about her legal blindness only this year. To protect Williams' privacy, Tammy did not give her last name."

"I couldn't believe it," Tammy said of Williams' revelation. "I've never seen her without the contacts. I've worked with people who are blind, so I thought I would know."

Williams has been told that if her KC becomes more severe, she might want to consider a cornea transplant. About 30 percent of patients choose to or need to have a transplant. Of those, 95 percent are successful, which means an increase in vision, though seldom to 20/20.

When her nephew was shot and killed last year, Williams for the first time thought seriously about surgery. "A couple of days after the funeral, I told my sister I should have asked for Little Gary's eyes," Williams said.

"She didn't know how to ask me," said her sister Joannita Williams. "She was kind of upset she didn't ask, and I was upset she didn't."

Tammy remembers her own conversation with Williams about a donor. "I asked her if I would matter if the eyes came from somebody who was bad," Tammy recalled. "She said yes. She said she would like to see the family to find out about the person. I said, 'Angie, what if they wouldn't tell you?' She said, 'Well, I wouldn't take them. I would just keep living with this problem.'"

"I would want to know about the person who gave me the eyes," Williams said. "I don't just want some corneas without knowing the person. I would have to know whose eyes would be seeing through."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Hope and controversy surround new AIDS therapy for babies

By Rosemary Okello and Felicity Snowsill

NAIROBI—A short-course of AZT drug therapy that reduces mother-to-baby transmission of HIV by 51 percent has been hailed as a medical breakthrough in the protection of infant health, particularly in Africa and Asia.

And the simultaneous announcement that the pharmaceutical giant Glaxo Wellcome intends to reduce the cost of ANZ to approximately \$50 per application in developing countries may help bridge the gap between the haves and the have-nots—the so-called treatment gap.

But controversy surrounds a related doctors' advice to HIV-positive mothers not to breastfeed their infants.

The short-course therapy was announced in March after a study conducted in Bangkok under the auspices of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the Thailand Ministry of Health and the United States Center for Disease Control. Treatment consisted of oral doses of AZT, an AIDS drug, given to a group of pregnant women with HIV.

AZT treatment is not new. Pregnant HIV-positive women and their newborns in western countries have been routinely offered AZT since 1994. The drug, when administered intravenously over many weeks, reduces rates of mother-to-baby transmission by 68 percent.

Until now, women in poor countries did not have this option. The cost of AZT treatment for mother and baby is about \$1,000—way beyond the purse strings of developing countries with health budgets of less than \$10 per capita. And the fact that it needed to be administered intravenously under regular supervision made it inappropriate for grassroots conditions.

However, a critical—and controversial—component of the therapy's success, according to researchers, is advising HIV-infected mothers not to breastfeed. The Thai participants gave their babies artificial milk substitutes to prevent HIV transmission through breastfeeding.

Data from developing countries indicate that up to half of all mother-to-child HIV transmission is due to breastfeeding. International efforts to find a treatment were spurred on by the grim prediction that AIDS may increase infant mortality by as much as 75 percent and under five mortality by more than 100 percent in the worst-affected regions by the year 2010.

Breastfeeding advocates have an equally grim warning: if African mothers stop natural feeding, the death rate



New drug could reduce mother-to-baby HIV transmission

in under-fives could more than double. Breastfeeding is one of Africa's success stories—its widespread promotion saves infant lives, providing vital protection against deadly childhood illnesses like diarrhea and respiratory ailments which are far more common than HIV.

For women to switch from breast to bottle is no academic question in Africa countries where the cost of infant formula is prohibitive and access to clean water lacking. Breastfeeding advocates in Zimbabwe estimate that the cost of providing enough of the very cheapest formula to feed one baby for a year is more than \$252,500 (US\$280).

Because of such realities—and in the absence of treatment—international health agencies initially advised that women breastfeed regardless of their HIV status, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa and other

regions where childhood infectious diseases are common and HIV testing is often not available.

But following the Thai study, new guidelines on infant feeding for policy makers and health care managers have been issued in April, according to Dr. Isobelle De Vincenzi of UNAIDS.

"It is now recommended that HIV-positive women should make an informed choice on infant feeding on an individual basis, and be supported in their choice," De Vincenzi told Panos Features. "However there should be strong promotion of breastfeeding for women who are not HIV-positive and do not know their status for sure," she added.

UNAIDS will promote confidential HIV testing and counseling for women, and the use of the short-term AZT regime. Women will be advised to use replacement feeding since breastfeeding may significantly reduce

the efficacy of the short AZT regime. And "treatment will not be withheld to women if they choose to breastfeed," Dr. Vincenzi added.

UNAIDS' ambitious plans may not be easy to implement in countries where health infrastructures are weak and resources scarce.

The experience of Kenyan mother Naomi Alieno (not her real name) is typical of how many women discover they are infected, and the often conflicting advice they receive about infant feeding before and after their HIV status is confirmed.

Alieno only learned she carried the virus when her sickly nine-month-old daughter was found to be HIV-positive. She then received a double blow: clinic workers, who had earlier advised her to breastfeed to ensure her baby's health, now told her that she had infected the child through breastfeeding and she should switch to baby milk, which she cannot afford.

Confusion over infant care is replicated across the continent. However, as early as 1996, advocacy groups like Zimbabwe's Women and AIDS Support Network were questioning the presumption that women could only "handle a single message" regarding HIV and child feeding practices.

Lynde Francis of The Center, a Harare-based organization providing information, support and counseling for people living with HIV/AIDS, believes that blanket statements that ignore individual situations are patronising. "But, she says, fears that breastfeeding will now be abandoned are unfounded."

The Centre's client Sipho confirms this: "If you are told that breastfeeding may pass the virus on to your child, and you are told ways to feed that child to reduce risks, it gives you courage as a mother."

UNAIDS expert Joseph Saba also concurs. The agency must "sit down with women and discuss the issue and let them make their own choices," he says.

As yet unknown is how baby milk companies will react to the new guidelines. Tess Martyn of the UK Baby Milk Action (BMA) is worried. "There are signs that the commercial baby milk companies are waiting to jump on the bandwagon, and are using the HIV breastfeeding debate to promote their products," she says.

Perhaps anticipating the many unresolved issues, UNAIDS Executive Director Dr. Peter Piot told the press in March that delays in implementing the new drug therapy can only lead to "significant deterioration. The question is no longer when or if we should act, but simply how," he said. ■

Panos

Occult:

Mere superstition or evil in our midst?

By Rasheed Al Roussan
Special to The Star

THROUGHOUT THE history of mankind, the quest for knowledge has played a large part in the evolution of different cultures around the world. The human search for the truth is ongoing.

Religions evolved as a response to humanity's need to unravel the mysteries of creation and existence. If we take a look back to ancient times, especially the Greeks and the Romans, we see that many religions and philosophies believed in the polyphony of gods and celestial beings.

These ancient gods were presumed to have magical powers beyond human grasp. However, magic was also practised by humans. Occultism, as it is now known, encompasses a knowledge of astrology, alchemy, divinity and other secret spells.

Practitioners believe that the world is a whole entity where everything is connected in a secret way. They seek to manipulate nature through their understanding of the mysterious relationships between seasons, planets, the four elements, and use believe that spells and rituals if practiced at certain auspicious times and in certain places can be very effective.

Being curious about the subject I decided to go and meet two practicing magicians. Fortunately, I wasn't privy to any demonstrations, but I asked one of them about the reasons for his interest in magic and about the exact nature of his rituals. He told me magic is a

religion for him, a way of living, a path to unravel secrets of creation.

On the nature of the rituals, he explained that there are various methods. Some spells, he said, require one to fast for a certain period of time in order to show obedience to the gods. Other methods involve the repetition of certain incantations and dances.

Some rituals require the practitioner to sacrifice animals to the divine powers and drink their blood. Naturally there are other rituals that are secret to practitioners only.

For the record, magic is divided into two categories, black magic and white magic. The former relates to the devil and evil practices. It is sometimes referred to as witchcraft. The second kind, however, is used mainly to heal, and spells and incantations are used for the wellbeing of individuals. Science and mythology are the ingredients of Occultism. Consequently it is difficult for one to consider magic as completely true or utterly false.

Our senses can't comprehend every phenomenon in the cosmos and even science is unable to interpret numerous mysterious events in our world.

Interest in the supernatural is documented throughout history and superstition is probably the most common and accepted form. Most people probably do not even see a connection

between astrology and other forms of magic, for instance, and regard having a mild curiosity of such matters as harmless. Is there any reason for concern?

Superstition is predominant in our society, especially in rural and poor urban areas. It is even becoming a fad for some of today's youngsters. There

is concern that young people today are perhaps suffering a lack of spiritual guidance and this is leading them to experiment with alternative practices.

Children are exposed to an increasingly large amount of information in schools and universities and they mingle with all sorts of different people. The Internet too exposes young people to a whole range of different ideas and philosophies.

We should listen to our children and urge them to tell us their fears, hopes and beliefs. Cults that have caused serious harm to young people have, after all, been periodically exposed in the media.

It is prudent for parents to warn their children to be vigilant and not to fall prey to the influence of those who may tempt them practices which could lead them to experiment with other immoral activities.

Tolerance, however, is important. Vampires do exist, and they don't suck blood—they corrupt minds. They dwell among us, they are everywhere. They exist in every society, in every religion. Appearances are deceiving.

Ultimately it is the person, not the practise, who is responsible for their actions. In the case of magic, for instance, it can be practised for good or it can be practised for evil.



Pots, pots, pottery

By Star Staff Writer

THE CHARM of ceramics, plain, or with fascinating and colorful paintings, can be seen in houses, galleries—indeed all over Jordan. You can buy them in shops or along Jordan's roads and highways. Pots and clay vases are a familiar and attractive sight for both locals and tourists.

Admiration of such delicate and fragile pieces is a reflection of people's endless quest for art and beauty. Ceramic pots are part of a long tradition.

In the past, they were used for preparing meals or for drinking water. Today, however, the use of ceramic pots is mainly ornamental or for holding flowers. Vases come in all forms and sizes, and most maintain their original clay color, although it has become fashionable to paint some graphically.

Pottery is simply made of a special type of sand and water. To ensure the mixture is strong and solid, salt is added to the clay. The potters then put the mixture in a pot especially designed to allow residue water to drain before moulding takes shape. Each item takes a week to dry, then it is put into a smouldering kiln.

Pottery can easily be damaged, however, by the effects of nature: cold, sun and humidity, although the chance of this type of deterioration occurring declines after

the pots have been used. Pharoshs once used pottery pots for drinking water and for cooking. Many people today still prefer to use a traditional Zair for drinking water.

Shops all over Jordan continue to offer a dazzling array of vases, utensils, drums, toys and safe boxes, all made from this enduring and aesthetically pleasing material. Moreover, most local pottery is highly affordable—the most you would be expected to pay for a simple vase, for example, is around JD 2.



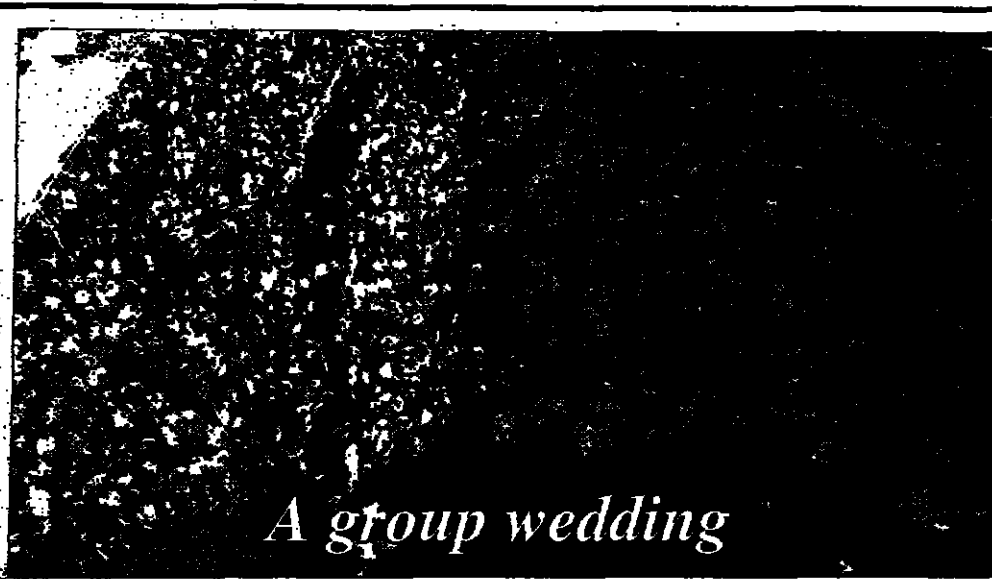
A group wedding

LAST WEEK one of the biggest group weddings in Jordan took place in Al Ithad Schools in Amman. Eighty-eight couples from different parts of the Kingdom took part in the marriage ceremony that was to be organized by the Al Afaf Charitable Society which is headed by Abdel Latif Arabayeh.

He expressed gratitude to participants in the festival saying that the marriage group idea is becoming increasingly accepted by society. Following that, Mr Wasfi Al Dahshan made a speech on behalf of the families thanking the organizers for making the wedding ceremony a great success.

The night was a fun evening, and the party listened to the sounds of Al Yarmouk, Al Ansar and Al Rawabi bands. These are Islamic chant groups that added special flavor.

Then the society presented gifts to the couples which were donated from one of the companies in Jordan and by private citizens. Three thousand guests were invited.



Coca Cola opens it's doors to the public

By Star Staff writer

THE COCA Cola Bottling Company (Jordan) organized a tour for journalists to their plant in Amman. They were met by Mr Yahia Ghazal—one of the many engineers who work in the bottling plant—and shown around by tour guides Ruba Nauman and Amer Al Hindi, who gave a very informative tour, outlining the bottling process used by Coca Cola in Jordan.

Wearing a safety helmet, we were shown the different stages involved in the bottling and refilling process.

The first stage involves the washing of the used bottles using warm water and caustic soda. The second stage involves a visual and electronic inspection of the bottles, after which the bottles are filled. The last stage is the level inspection to make sure that the content meets the required amount.

The bottling plant is one of the largest in Jordan, and is equipped with the latest high tech equipment. The company received a Silver Award last year, and went one better this year with the Golden Award for their standard of excellence.

Coca-Cola (Jordan) recently opened its doors to schools as part of the Plant tour program, and aims to accommodate more than 20,000 pupils over the next five years.

The program—launched in April—has welcomed more than 1000 students from over 30 schools so far, providing educational information on the latest high-tech systems used in producing the world's No. 1 soft drink.

Miss Numan said "We are pleased to be able to give visitors a first-hand look at the steps involved in making Coca-Cola. We hope this program will serve as an informative and enjoyable learning experience for schools groups and other members of the community."

The schools that have participated in this fun program include Universal Schools (the first to participate), the Orthodox School, Alpha Beta, Zaid Bin Al-Khattab, Muslima Sadeq Al Rifa'i, Ibn Taymeen, Al Izhar, Salma Bint

Omeish, and Jubran Khalil Jubran to name but a few. Coca-Cola (Jordan) also recently welcomed children from the SOS village and the Princess Haya Cultural Centre, taking them on a fun, educational tour around its facilities.



Photo by Mahmoud Shawka

Brotherly love, from the Bible to Michael Bolton

By Laurie Mansfield

OH, BROTHER! Is that Fred Imus all over Stop & Shop with his book and his salsa? What makes him so special, anyway? The answer: sibling Don has a nationally syndicated morning talk radio show. Fred's following in the familiar footsteps of many a brother before him. He is just one of a spate of brothers lately who have hit the big time—a step behind their famous sibs.

The concept is hardly new—one family member makes it big and other fame-seekers with similar looks and genes soon follow. Dark-haired Baldwins started cropping up in Hollywood after brother Alec became a well-known actor.

Presidential brothers, like Billy Carter and "Moon" Reagan, always made their presence felt, for good or ill. Just look at Roger Clinton. The first brother's band was practically nonexistent before big brother Bill moved into the White House, and it will return to deserved obscurity when he leaves. And then there's the Kennedy clan. Some brothers, like the music group Hanson, mmm-bopped their way to the top together.

It wasn't always this way. Less-famous biblical brothers sometimes figured their own chances for fame would improve once they got rid of a brother. But jettisoning their flesh and blood often backfired. Stripping Joseph of his coat-of-many-colors and selling him into slavery didn't do his 10 greedy half-brothers any good. It actually helped Joseph become part of the pharaoh's entourage. And Cain was sentenced to wander the Earth after killing his brother Abel.

Today's brothers tend to skip the sibling rivalry. Many have wised up and realized the benefits of sharing the family name. Some celebs even reach down to their sibs with a helping hand. Don Imus has been known to make room for his cranky younger bro on his popular radio show.

Many listeners thought the zany Imus was just making up another character for his show, and that brother Fred didn't exist. That all changed when Fred launched his own line of salsa, tortilla chips and Western clothes and wrote his first solo book, "The Fred Book," earlier this year.

Of course, when lesser-known brothers begin to make a name for themselves, their talent is often questioned and scrutinized by those who wonder if they are just mooching off their siblings' fame. It gets even worse for brothers who are



Bolton

in the same trade, like singers Orrin and Michael Bolton. With long-flowing locks, Orrin Bolton may look like a carbon copy of his Grammy-winning brother but insists he's not trying to be (Michael now has short hair!).

"The last thing the world needs is two Michael Boltons," Orrin said. "Not that I have his vocal prowess, but there is a resemblance." There is such a resemblance between the two brothers that when Orrin realized Michael's potential as a singer in the '70s, he cut his hair, grew a beard and changed his name to Orrin Mitchell while he worked behind the scenes to start his brother's singing career.

"I put everything on hold," said Orrin, who got Michael his first record deal. "The obvious choice was to get Michael where he wanted to go." Orrin, who has now returned to singing and recorded an album, "Take a Vacation," said he won't be disappointed if he doesn't become famous.

"It's more than his soul should have to take," Orrin said about Michael's fame. "Success is great, but the price is very high."

Both Boltons live in Connecticut. But Orrin said he doesn't get to see much of Michael, who is constantly on tour. "We used to end up in the kitchen with guitars and pasta on the stove," Orrin said with a tinge of sadness. "But I guarantee if I drove over there now, I would be alone in the kitchen."

Pulitzer Prize-winning author Frank McCourt's younger brother, Malachy McCourt, was offered what he says was a "very large advance" to write a book that publishers hoped would be as popular as Frank's "Angela's Ashes." Although the younger McCourt's upbeat, humorous book, "A Monk Swimming," has a completely different tone from Frank's heart-rending memoir, reviewers often use Frank's book to gauge Malachy's talent. Malachy just laughs when he reads reviews that say that he is "no Frank McCourt." "And here I've been going around for years thinking I'm Frank McCourt and thinking I've written 'Angela's Ashes,'" Malachy joked.

Even with all the comparisons, Malachy said he and Frank, who is "a year, a month and a day older," are able to laugh most of it off. "Growing up in abject poverty left us with a sense of the absurd," Malachy said. "The things that crack us up are fairly mutual." Even though Frank revealed potentially embarrassing McCourt family secrets in "Angela's Ashes," Malachy said his older brother didn't discuss much of the book with him while he was writing it.

"He asked me about one thing and I told him. 'Write it,'" Malachy said. "And he did. It did so much to unite the brothers."

LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

Le roi pourrait bientôt subir une chimiothérapie

Le roi Hussein a écrit cette semaine, dans une lettre adressée à son frère, le prince héritier Hassan, qu'il devrait entamer une chimiothérapie aux États-Unis où il est hospitalisé depuis une semaine pour un lymphome, une infection des glandes lymphatiques. «Tous les indices portent à croire que je suis atteint d'un lymphome mais les médecins n'arrivent pas à être catégoriques» sur la nature de la maladie, a dit le roi dans son message. Le souverain affirme souffrir «d'une chute des plaquettes sanguines qui entraîne une déficience immunitaire, laquelle ne s'est pas améliorée depuis mon arrivée» à la clinique Mayo à Rochester le 14 juillet. Selon lui, les médecins «prévoient attendre les résultats définitifs des analyses (de laboratoires), avant d'entamer la chimiothérapie qui accentuera la déficience immunitaire». Tout en affirmant se sentir «meilleux dans l'ensemble», le souverain hachémite note que «des poussées de fièvre se manifestent à raison de trois fois toutes les 48 heures» et qu'il «est sous traitement continu en antibiotiques». Le roi Hussein qui fêtera le 11 août prochain ses 46 ans de règne, est étroitement associé à l'évolution de son pays où, aujourd'hui, près de 70% de la population (4 millions) n'ont pas connu d'autre monarque. Son départ inopiné pour la clinique Mayo a sidéré les Jordanien qui ont appris ce jour-là que le souverain souffrait depuis 12 jours de poussées de fièvre et de frissons. L'annonce, quatre jours plus tard du report de la visite du roi en France, prévue à partir du 21 juillet, a renforcé les inquiétudes. Le roi a déjà subi en août 1992 l'ablation du rein gauche après la découverte de cellules cancéreuses. Ses médecins l'avaient ensuite déclaré guéri à la suite d'examen médicaux réguliers. Opéré en avril 97 pour corriger un agrandissement bénin de la prostate, il a également été hospitalisé à l'automne dernier, toujours à la clinique Mayo. Il avait alors subi l'ablation d'un ganglion lymphatique, une «tumeur bénigne» selon les analyses.



Éclaboussures

La presse en danger

Souvent considérée comme un quatrième pouvoir, la presse dans le monde arabe est pourtant en perte de vitesse. Violation de la liberté d'expression, détention temporaire, perquisitions, blocs-out imposés par le gouvernement sur certains événements délicats, expulsion des journalistes, refus d'accorder des visas, intimidation, confiscation, tous les moyens sont bons pour bâillonner les journaux. Parmi les pays arabes les moins tendres avec la presse, on trouve la Syrie, l'Algérie, l'Irak, l'Égypte et le Maroc. Mais de manière générale, les moyens d'information sont contrôlés partout par les autorités. Les États ont pris l'habitude de surveiller de près télévision, radio et presse écrite. La Jordanie n'échappe pas à cette règle du pluralisme limité. Mais le cas de la Syrie est pire. La liberté accordée y est réduite à la portion congrue. La politique officielle est un sujet tabou à traiter avec mille précautions. Le journaliste qui s'attaque à des points sensibles et s'aventure un peu trop loin dans la critique des grandes orientations politiques, est poursuivi, interdit d'écrire ou jeté en prison. Dans ces conditions, les journalistes s'interrogent sur leur utilité. Ibrahim Nafeh, président de l'Union des journalistes égyptiens, constate avec amertume que la liberté, l'essence même du métier, qui répond à une demande populaire et «gêne ceux qui pensent toujours avoir la vérité», est absente dans la presse arabe.

A l'occasion de la visite du président Hafez Al-Assad à Paris, l'association «Journalistes sans frontières» a publié une liste noire où la Syrie vient en tête des violations de la liberté d'expression. Dans son rapport, elle considère le pays soumis à un régime draconien dont les journaux et les moyens d'information publics sont des propagateurs de la pensée officielle. Toujours selon cette association, il y aurait en Syrie sept journalistes emprisonnés depuis dix ans, pendant que beaucoup d'autres vivent dans des conditions épouvantables, privés par exemple de soins médicaux. Ils ne sont pas condamnés pour violence mais simplement parce qu'ils sont membres d'associations de droits de l'homme ou de partis d'opposition. En outre, selon l'association syrienne des droits de l'homme, 2500 prisonniers politiques se morfondraient dans les cellules d'État. «Journalistes sans frontières» a appelé Jacques Chirac à faire pression sur son homologue syrien pour libérer les détenus d'opinion. Pendant cette visite d'État, le président français a surtout répété que la Syrie était incontournable dans le processus de paix.

Enfin, lors de sa conférence annuelle il y a une semaine au Liban, l'Union des journalistes arabes a réclamé plus de liberté et appelle les gouvernements à cesser de poursuivre les journalistes d'opposition. L'Union a évoqué également ces fameuses lignes rouges qu'il ne faut pas franchir sous peine de graves ennuis qui vont du licenciement à l'arrestation. Problème : ces lignes rouges sont toujours très mal définies. De grands traits pour fixer les cadres sacrés et interdits de la vie politique, de la religion, de la sécurité, de l'unité nationale. Des lignes rouges qui sont autant de chaînes en Syrie comme ailleurs. ■

Youssef Abu Saleh

XVIIème Festival de Jérash Programme du 23 au 29 juillet

Tous les spectacles des principaux théâtres commencent à 20h30

Théâtre Sud

23, 24, 25 : Diana Haddad, chanteuse libanaise
26, 27 : Mazowsze, groupe folklorique polonais
28, 29 : Marcel Khalifeh, chanteur libanais

Théâtre Nord

23, 24 : Nassef Shamma, joueur de oud
25, 26 : La troupe andaloussienne Ibn Baya (Espagne)
27, 28 : Ana-Lise Bernsten, cantatrice norvégienne
29 : Défilé de mode, «Le rêve oriental»



Théâtre Artémis

23, 24 : Théâtre, «La douzième nuit» par la troupe britannique Original Shakespeare Compagny
25 : La troupe jordanienne Jafra
26, 27 : Musique arabe par une troupe d'Irbid
28 : La troupe de l'Université nationale d'Amman (Jordanie)
29 : La troupe de l'Université de Philadelphia (Jordanie)

Théâtre Son et Lumière

23, 24, 25, 26 : Cendrillon, pièce pour les enfants (Jordanie)
26, 2, 28, 29 : Contes des Frères Grimm lus par le Polonais Teatr Laik

Sans oublier les jeunes talents qui se produiront à Garasa (à partir de 20h), les activités traditionnelles du Forum (à partir de 18h30) et les diverses expositions.

Départs d'Amman pour Jérash à 16h30 et 18h30 à la station de bus Abdali ou au McDonald's de la rue Gosheh. Pour tout renseignement, tél. : 5675199. Un site internet : www.JerashFestival.com.jo

Entretien avec Denis Toupin

«On sait où chercher notre public»

Le directeur du Centre culturel français et de coopération linguistique (raccourci en CCF) revient sur une saison 97/98 placée sous le signe de la communication.

Avec des parents globotiers

Denis Toupin a très tôt goûté les plaisirs de l'expatriation. Polyglotte surdoué (un accent arabe du Yémen où il a passé sept ans et l'exotisme du laotien), ce xénophile de 35 ans caresse toujours le rêve de parcourir le monde. À la fin de sa mission en Jordanie, il ne se voit pas retourner en France et réintègre le sérail l'Éducation nationale. Professeur de formation, il enseigne à l'université de Sanaa en 1988 avant d'être chargé par les Affaires étrangères françaises d'ouvrir un Centre culturel. C'est là qu'il y découvre ses futures fonctions jordanien. À la moitié de son parcours il est à la tête du CCF d'Amman depuis deux ans. Denis Toupin se souvient, à son arrivée, avoir été décontenancé par la diversité jordanienne : «Il y a en Jordanie deux classes sociales très distinctes avec à l'intérieur de chacune d'elles des différences culturelles importantes : les Palestiniens d'origine, ceux venus du Koweït, les Jordaniens de souche ont une manière différente d'apprécier ce que nous faisons». Il pense aujourd'hui avoir percé à jour ce public multiforme.

Le Jourdain : Quel bilan tirez-vous de cette saison ? Denis Toupin : Cette année a été un peu le résultat d'une nouvelle donne et de tous les contacts que j'avais pris. Il y a eu notamment deux nouveautés avec Zebda et la Semaine de la Francophonie. Je me rends compte que, pour l'année qui vient, il faut fixer des rendez-vous en reprenant des spectacles déjà réalisés et attendus par le public. Parmi les dates importantes, on gardera le festival du théâtre des troupes indépendantes en mars, le festival du film franco-arabe début juin et un grand spectacle populaire avec la venue de Faudel un peu

avant la mi-mai. En gros, on connaît mieux le public et en conséquence nous allons réduire le prix des billets car même à 3 ou 5 JD, c'est déjà trop. Les billets seront payants mais limités à un ou un demi dinar.

Le Jourdain : Alors bilan positif ou négatif ? D. T. : C'est positif par rapport au budget qu'on y a mis. On a fait plus d'activités que l'année dernière avec le même budget, c'est-à-dire 23.000 JD (pour les activités culturelles seulement et sur un total de 400.000 JD - NDLR). Bien sûr, nous avons reçu des critiques qui prouvent aussi que les gens s'intéressent à ce que l'on propose. Surtout, nous avons réussi à toucher différents publics et les prévisions d'audience étaient assez proches de la réalité.

Par ailleurs, on a beaucoup parlé de nous cette année dans les journaux, notamment au moment de la Semaine de la Francophonie.

Et puis au cours de cette année, la mairie d'Amman est devenue un partenaire très important voire incontournable avec la création d'un énorme centre culturel à Ras Al Ein. On travaille plus qu'avant en synergie avec les acteurs locaux.

Le Jourdain : Vous dites que vous connaissez mieux votre public. Pourriez-vous le définir ?

D. T. : Je dis que l'on connaît mieux le public car on sait mieux où aller le chercher, le trouver et comment axer notre pub pour toucher les différents

types de publics. Nous avons réalisé un bel effort sur la communication, concernant notamment la radio. Et avec la télévision jordanienne, nous préparons un protocole d'accord qui consiste à former des gens de la télé au Centre et en contre-partie à diffuser notre programme à l'antenne. De plus, nous avons systématisé les conférences de presse, ce qui est nouveau cette année.

Le Jourdain : Le Centre culturel s'est-il transformé en office de communication ?

D. T. : Non. Jusqu'à présent, on faisait de la diffusion culturelle sans montrer qu'on était présent. C'est vrai qu'en termes de communication, nous avons réalisé des progrès mais cela ne veut pas dire que la qualité est en baisse, au contraire. Grâce à notre coopération avec nos collègues de Damas et de Bagdad, on obtient des prix intéressants auprès des groupes et de l'AFAA (l'Association française d'action artistique, en liaison avec le Ministère des affaires étrangères, propose diverses activités aux centres culturels, NDLR), qui est contente de voir que nous parlons d'une même voix et nous aide en conséquence. Si l'AFAA nous propose un spectacle qui a bien tourné en France, dans le monde, à des prix intéressants, on va accepter. Mais on a aussi la possibilité de refuser.

Le Jourdain : En recherchant ainsi les meilleurs prix possibles, la programmation culturelle ne risque-t-elle pas de se dégrader ? D. T. : Non, je ne crois pas. On

Jérash La fête, oui, pas la foire

Depuis hier, la cité antique est vouée aux arts. Dans un pays au dynamisme culturel proche de l'encéphalogramme plat, le festival représente un pic toujours très attendu aussi bien par les locaux que par les étrangers. Surtout que, l'organisation, critiquée l'an passé, a été remaniée.

Papier glacé, frise hétéroclite des artistes invités, calendrier clair et impeccablement présenté, la plaquette du festival est bien là, en anglais et en arabe, une bonne semaine avant le début des festivités. Normal. Pas de quoi s'enthousiasmer. Toutefois les mauvais souvenirs d'un programme 97 incomplet, photocopié à la va-vite et à peine traduit, est suffisant pour apprécier ce changement notable. Suffisant et nécessaire aussi pour mettre le public et la presse dans de meilleures dispositions à l'égard d'un festival qui a souvent péché par son manque de professionnalisme. Face au célèbre festival libanais de Baalbek qui a ouvert ses portes en août dernier, après 22 ans d'absence, Jérash doit prouver qu'elle a sa place sur la scène culturelle régionale. En 1997, selon le directeur, Akram Masarwi, le festival a couvert tous ses frais en rapportant environ deux millions de dinars. «Les sources de financement sont diverses, explique-t-il, nous recevons un peu d'argent de l'État, 120.000 JD, mais surtout nous avons signé un contrat avec la chaîne satellite a. r. t., ce qui lui donne le droit de filmer toutes les manifestations et de les commercialiser». Sans donner de chiffres, il précise cependant que ce contrat leur a permis de couvrir leurs dépenses et sera renouvelé cette année. Bref, financièrement, à en croire Akram Masarwi, le festival de Jérash se porte bien mais le directeur admet volontiers que

les aides publiques restent limitées en comparaison avec les ponts d'or versés à Baalbek : 800.000 dollars de la part de l'État libanais. Que la machine privée se tarisse en vue. C'est pourquoi les organisateurs cherchent à maintenir la qualité avec des moyens qui ne semblent pourtant pas extensibles. Le festival est loin d'être une affaire rentable : «Nous cherchons surtout à couvrir nos dépenses pour rester debout, déclare le directeur, mais il faut tenir compte de la notoriété des groupes participants : s'ils sont trop connus, les coûts seront élevés, ce qui nous coûtera plus cher. Donc la recette du festival sera moindre». Cette édition 98 (du 22 juillet au 8 août) offre tout de même encore un plateau de choix avec 30 nationalités représentées et côté chanson, par exemple, la populaire Diana Haddad (dès ce soir) et l'engagé Marcel Khalifeh.

Voici pour le contenu. Quant au contenant, le directeur du festival promet de nets progrès par rapport à 1997 : «Cette année, le secret de la réussite

de ce festival tiendra dans l'équilibre entre la programmation et de l'organisation». Nous ne demandons qu'à voir. La direction a décidé en partenariat avec des compagnies de transport de mettre une cinquantaine de cars de tourisme à la disposition des spectateurs et des troupes qui se rendent sur le site, avec des départs à heures fixes (voir programme ci-contre).

À Jérash, les deux entrées principales du Théâtre Sud seront équipées pour la première fois de portes automatiques afin de filtrer et de réguler les spectateurs et d'éviter la foire d'empoigne des années précédentes.

D'autre part les spectateurs qui auront choisi le Théâtre Nord bénéficieront d'un ticket spécial pour garer leur voiture gratuitement.

Oubliée aussi la polémique de l'an passé entre la direction du festival et la presse, à la suite d'une fouille un peu trop serrée d'un journaliste. Désormais ce sont des femmes qui vérifieront l'identité des femmes de presse. Décidément les organisateurs n'ont rien voulu laisser au hasard en ajoutant ainsi un peu de rigueur à la fête. ■

Youssef Abu Saleh



Le Forum, rendez-vous populaire et traditionnel obligé du festival.

Santé publique

Boire l'eau d'Amman : danger ?

Face à un gouvernement peu pédagogue, les habitants de la capitale ont rapidement cédé aux rumeurs de pollution. Le point sur une algue en décomposition qui alimente tous les intérêts.

Y-a-t-il

quelque chose de pourri dans les eaux distribuées à Amman ? Sans aucun doute. Chaque usager a pu remarquer depuis quelques temps l'odeur de moisi et le goût terreux de l'eau à la sortie de leurs robinets. Munther Haddadin, le ministre de l'Eau et de l'Irrigation, a finit par avouer cette semaine la présence sous forme dissoute d'une algue dans les réseaux de la ville. Sa décomposition serait à l'origine de nos désagréments sensoriels. Pas très agréable mais pas très dangereux non plus. En période de haute température comme actuellement, le développement dans l'eau de diverses matières organiques (ou eutrophisation) est tout à fait normal. Seulement, qu'on les retrouve le matin en prenant sa douche ou dans son verre à table ne l'est plus et révèle une négligence dans le traitement en amont.

La polémique s'est alors concentrée sur l'usine de traitement des eaux de Zai près de Salt. Un député n'a pas hésité à fustiger les employés de la station en les accusant de «ne pas avoir fait leur travail».

On peut effectivement s'interroger sur l'attention portée à ce qui sort des tuyaux de Zai et mettre en cause le manque de vigilance, en cette période pro-

pice à la prolifération de cochenilles en milieu aquatique.

Munther Haddadin a assuré que la situation était revenue à la normale, sans donner plus de détails. Un ministre peu disert qui a, de fait, alimenté toutes les hypothèses et les rumeurs. Des experts de l'Organisation Mondiale de la Santé ont réalisé une série de tests à l'usine de Zai, concernant notamment le processus de filtration mais ils n'ont pas été autorisés à dévoiler leurs résultats. Le gouvernement s'est ainsi contenté de répéter que tout allait bien, tout en conseillant aux gens de faire bouillir leur eau avant de la boire ! Des déclarations pas très rassurantes qui ont suffi à nourrir l'affolement. Les Ammanites se sont alors précipités chez leur épiciers ou dans les grandes surfaces afin de constituer des stocks d'eau minérale. De même, les compagnies privées, qui, grâce à leurs camions-citernes, peuvent fournir de l'eau aux particuliers ont bien compris leur intérêt et ont augmenté le prix du mètre du cube par quatre ou cinq.

«Qu'importe, plutôt payer le prix fort que de s'empoisonner». Certes, mais la preuve d'un quelconque danger d'intoxication n'a pas encore été

faite. Certains journaux rapportent une augmentation des cas de diarrhée et de nausées dans plusieurs hôpitaux de la capitale. Mais rien ne dit que ces douleurs sont liées à la mauvaise qualité de l'eau. «Les gens, dès qu'ils ont mal au ventre, s'imaginent que c'est à cause de l'eau et viennent nous voir alors qu'il n'y a rien», raconte un médecin de l'Hôpital de l'Université, qui a su garder la tête froide.

Bref, il semble que toute cette histoire se résume à «beaucoup de bruit pour rien». Selon un expert français, ce phénomène de prolifération organique n'est pas nouveau. «Cela ressemble plutôt à une tentative de déstabilisation du ministre de l'Eau», a proposé le spécialiste. Munther Haddadin est en effet très critiqué pour ses positions et ses actions en faveur de la normalisation avec l'État hébreu. Il est vrai qu'au début de la polémique, certains ont mis en doute la qualité des eaux du lac de Tibériade, sous contrôle israélien et dont profite la Jordanie. Comme à chaque fois dans cette partie du monde, quand il y a un problème d'eau, la politique n'est pas loin. ■

Le Jourdain



Les camions-citernes n'ont cessé de sillonner la ville pour alimenter des particuliers méfiant à l'égard de leur eau de robinet (photo George Kazazian).

Propos recueillis par Nabeel Al-Khloof et Yannick Lainé

Le mot de la semaine «DIPLOMATIE»

Des l'Antiquité. L'étymologie associe le mot diplomate au mot diplomat, qui désigne un document inscrit sur des tablettes de terre ou de métal placées en deux exemplaires, l'un remis au destinataire, l'autre à l'expéditeur. Le terme grec diplomatia vient du verbe diplôo, «plier», dans le sens de «replier» ou «plier en deux». Diplomatia n'apparaît qu'au XVIII^e siècle, en tant que dérivé de l'adjectif diplomatique, qui désigne les documents officiels et internationaux. Ce mot de base est perçu dans le sillage de la même forme, la diplomatie, science, art, ou l'art, qui étudie la tradi-

tion, la forme et la gestion des documents diplomatiques (lettres, chartes et autres archives). Le sens de diplomatie est aujourd'hui élargi en tant que qualité de communication sociale : user de diplomatie, c'est faire preuve d'habileté, de politesse et de tact dans la conduite d'une affaire. Mais la diplomatie n'est-elle pas aussi un art de veiller à la résolution pacifique d'un conflit, elle constitue également le Pacte-Orient le sait, à combien ! une manière plus subtile et mieux agréée de mener une guerre. ■

Véronique Abu-Nijm



La célèbre poignée de mains entre Arafat et Rabin en 1993.

C'est la vie

L'agenda français d'Amman

Cinéma

Cycle consacré aux sourires du cinéma français. Les nuits de la pleine lune, film d'Éric Rohmer (1984) en couleur, sous-titré en arabe avec Fabrice Luchini, P. Ogier, T. Karyo. Au fil du quotidien, la désintégration d'un couple. Lundi 27 juillet au Centre culturel français à 18h30 et 20h30. Renseignements au CCF au 4636445 ou 4637009.

Exposition

De très belles pages ont été écrites sur le sport. De Honoré de Balzac à Georges Pérec en passant par Victor Hugo, l'exposition «Sport et littérature» nous en présente les principales réalisations en 22 affiches. Jusqu'au 30 juillet au CCF.

Sport

Un peu de salsa dans le volley-ball

Un Cubain vient d'être nommé à la tête de l'équipe nationale de volley-ball. Les Jordaniens comptent profiter de l'expérience professionnelle de haut niveau de Gilberto Crowe pour bien figurer l'an prochain aux Jeux Panarabes.

Décontracté, la quarantaine toujours sportive, Gilberto Crowe vient de débarquer de son Cuba natal. Derrière lui, sa famille et dans ses bagages, un curriculum bien fourni. Il a notamment suivi l'entraînement de quatre joueurs de haut niveau qui évoluent dans la sélection nationale de son île. Aujourd'hui dans un pays dont il ne connaît pas (encore) la langue, il est le nouveau gourou des équipes nationales féminine et masculine. Premières impressions, premières ambitions.

Le Jourdain : Pourquoi avez-vous décidé de venir en Jordanie ?
Gilberto Crowe : J'ai rempli un dossier dans mon pays pour obtenir un autre travail. Le gouvernement de Cuba a alors envoyé mon curriculum à plusieurs pays et c'est la Jordanie qui l'a acheté. J'ai accepté le contrat. Beaucoup de gens m'ont dit que la Jordanie était un pays très différent de moi. C'est vrai mais malgré tout, je pense qu'il était bon pour moi de changer. C'est une bonne opportunité de connaître une autre culture.

Le Jourdain : Quelle équipe avez-vous trouvée en arrivant ?
G. C. : L'équipe a besoin d'une aide professionnelle. Les joueurs font des fautes au niveau de leurs bases techniques, qui reviennent à chaque match. C'est le cas par exemple dans la réception du ballon. L'équipe a un niveau acceptable de club mais il faut un travail constant de tout le monde.

Au total, l'entraîneur 28 garçons et filles. Ils sont tous prêts à apprendre et à accepter les critiques pour s'améliorer. Cela fait un mois que je suis ici et nous avons joué et gagné deux fois contre la Syrie. Mais nous devons travailler beaucoup. Les garçons s'entraînent 15 heures par semaine et les filles, six heures, mais ce n'est pas suffisant pour qu'une équipe de volley-ball joue au niveau international. A Cuba, nous nous entraînons huit heures par jour.

Le Jourdain : Que pouvez-vous faire pour améliorer le niveau de l'équipe ?

G. C. : C'est un travail qui ne peut se faire en un mois ou deux. Il est plus facile de former une personne que de la corriger. Nous allons travailler la technique et le physique. Mais je considère qu'avoir un esprit de collectivité et de fraternité est aussi très important.

Le Jourdain : Quels sont vos objectifs ?

G. C. : Je dois donner le meilleur de moi-même, c'est-à-dire mon professionnalisme, pour que cette équipe obtienne une bonne représentation internationale. Je suis optimiste pour les Jeux Panarabes qui se dérouleront l'année prochaine en Jordanie. Nous travaillons pour cela mais il faut avant tout corriger toutes les fautes.

Le Jourdain : Comment faites-vous pour communiquer avec les joueurs puisque

vous ne parlez pas l'arabe ?
G. C. : Je sais déjà compter jusqu'à dix ! Non, franchement, cela ne pose pas de problèmes car on parle anglais ensemble. Et puis ils sont très gentils. Je n'ai pas à me plaindre. Depuis que je suis arrivé, je constate que les Jordaniens sont très honnêtes et d'une grande hospitalité.

Le Jourdain : Cuba vous manque-t-il ?

G. C. : Je suis arrivé seul ici sans ma famille et c'est dur. J'ai deux filles et je pense toujours à elles. Les Cubains sont très ouverts, simples et spontanés. Ici, les gens me paraissent plus compliqués. En fait, la chaleur humaine de mon entourage, le sourire de mes amis, me manquent beaucoup.

Propos recueillis par Amineh Ishtay



«Un esprit de collectivité et de fraternité est très important aussi», Gilberto Crowe.

Les députés, simples prestataires de services

Face à un gouvernement tout puissant, la marge de manœuvre des représentants du peuple semble réduite. Sans assistance, ballotés entre les divers courants politiques de la Chambre, ils tentent de sauvegarder leur prestige en jouant la carte régionaliste. En pleine session extraordinaire, petit détour par le Majlis Umma.

Selon la Constitution

jordanienne, le député a le droit de voter la confiance au gouvernement, de lui poser des questions qui relèvent du pouvoir exécutif et de proposer des projets de loi. À part ces trois fonctions, le reste est ambigu ou mal défini. Comparé aux prérogatives d'un ministre, le rôle d'un député se réduit à peu de choses. C'est pourquoi l'action d'un parlementaire doit toujours être envisagée en fonction du groupe parlementaire auquel il appartient. Au cours des neuf dernières années, seul le groupe des islamistes a été marqué par une certaine constance (interrompue lors des dernières législatives avec le boycott du Front d'Action islamique). Les autres groupes sont plus aléatoires. Déjà ils changent de nous au gré des nouvelles «chambres» : «bloc national», «bloc démocratique», «bloc d'entente» et balaisent un large éventail politique en recrutant des députés indépendants de gauche, du centre ou qui cherchent tout simplement à se placer.

Si certains sont épaulés par un secrétaire, en général, les députés sont le plus souvent seuls dans leur travail quotidien. Ils ont, en effet, un salaire (900 dinars par mois, plus divers privilèges comme l'achat d'une voiture d'occasion) ne leur permettant pas d'embourser des conseillers ou de constituer un secrétariat important. Mais quelques-uns, surtout ceux qui sont soutenus par des partis politiques, ont tout de même recours à des spécialistes qui les aident dans la préparation de leurs interventions.

Les députés participent également aux différentes commissions (droit, éducation, agriculture, finances etc...) pour étudier les projets de loi ou des aspects précis de la politique gouvernementale. Au bout du compte, ils doivent être



Dès qu'ils peuvent, les députés de la Chambre profitent des caméras de télévision pour se montrer à leurs électeurs.

capables de comprendre, de discuter, d'analyser, d'amender les dossiers variés qui leur sont soumis. On observe à cet égard une évolution du niveau d'éducation des députés. Jadis, l'analphabetisme était une exception dans l'Hémicycle. Il importait peu alors de savoir lire ou écrire, à partir du moment où l'on était reconnu chef de tribu. Les députés ont changé depuis. Si la pauvreté culturelle chez certains parlementaires peut effrayer la proportion d'universitaires, d'écrivains, d'ingénieurs, a notablement augmenté. Ainsi la XI^{ème} Chambre (1989-1993), fortement teintée d'intelligentsia, s'est caractérisée par son dynamisme.

Par ailleurs, s'ajoute aujourd'hui dans les tranches de la Chambre des députés, un certain esprit de clocher. Avec l'arrivée de la télévision, les parlementaires même s'ils font partie du même bloc insistent pour passer devant les caméras au cours des séances de questions au gouvernement ou sur

le budget de l'État. C'est le moment privilégié des doléances : tel député demandera la construction d'un centre de santé dans sa circonscription, tel autre réclamera l'intervention ur-

gente des services de la voirie. L'important est de se faire bien voir auprès d'électeurs supposés attentifs derrière leur écran.

Cette démagogie médiatique s'accompagne de contacts réguliers sur le terrain. Le député, qui a le devoir de ne pas oublier son électeur sous peine d'être qualifié d'opportuniste, se charge de trouver des emplois à «ses» chômeurs, une place à l'université pour «ses» étudiants et rendre autant de petits services possibles à «ses» concitoyens.

Cet effet s'est encore accentué avec la loi électorale dite de «la voix unique». Désormais, certains députés sont élus avec 800 ou 1200 scrutins seulement, devenant de simples «députés de services». Une formule, peut-être, mais qui résume assez bien l'idée que le Jordanien moyen se fait de son représentant national. ■

Suleiman Sweiss

Irresponsable et inviolable

Le député jordanien est l'un des 23 membres du parlement national (pour l'instant) et possède tous les droits et tous les devoirs d'un député. Il est élu pour une durée de quatre ans et peut être réélu. Il a le droit de proposer des lois et de voter. Il est élu par les citoyens de sa circonscription. Il est élu pour une durée de quatre ans et peut être réélu. Il a le droit de proposer des lois et de voter. Il est élu par les citoyens de sa circonscription.

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Julien Sorel ou la chronique d'un hypocrite

Le Rouge et le Noir, un roman de Stendhal (1830).

En prêt au Centre culturel français.

C'est un roman écrit dans la première partie du XIX^e siècle, inspiré de deux faits divers. Premièrement, l'affaire Lafargue : un ouvrier tombe amoureux d'une femme mariée. Mais celle-ci veut rompre. Lafargue se venge en la tuant. Deuxièmement, l'affaire Berthet. Ce fils de marchand-ferrant est admis au séminaire de Grenoble (la ville natale de Stendhal). Mais, très malade, le jeune homme est obligé d'interrompre ses études et devient précepteur dans une famille riche. Il est alors accusé d'avoir une liaison avec la maîtresse de maison. Renvoyé, Berthet reprend du service dans la maison voisine où il est soupçonné de séduire la mère de ses élèves. Poursuivie par son ancienne maîtresse qui ne supporte pas d'avoir été si facilement remplacée, la jeune Berthet se venge et lui tire dessus. Il est ensuite condamné à mort.

Complexe d'infériorité

Les traits principaux de la pauvre vie de Julien Sorel, le héros du roman, sont un mélange de ces deux histoires. Pas très imaginaire, le père Stendhal qui s'est contenté de dépeindre les chiens égarés. Mais grâce à son style souple et prévenant, il n'hésite pas à s'inquiéter de l'ennui du lecteur, il est vite pardonné.

Julien est fils de charpentier. Mais il est chétif et adore la lecture, deux défauts impardonnables pour réussir dans le métier de son père. Que peut-il faire alors ? S'il était né plus tôt, il aurait pu servir dans l'armée de Napoléon. «L'homme providentiel» que Dieu a envoyé pour sauver la France, et s'établir de rouge. Mais il le peuple, et s'établir de rouge. Mais il est trop tard. Déterminé à faire carrière à tout prix, Julien Sorel, le héros du roman, est un mélange de ces deux histoires. Pas très imaginaire, le père Stendhal qui s'est contenté de dépeindre les chiens égarés. Mais grâce à son style souple et prévenant, il n'hésite pas à s'inquiéter de l'ennui du lecteur, il est vite pardonné.



Illustration du roman au XIX^e siècle.

Mme de Rênal vient compromettre cette relation. Harcelé, Julien tente de la mener dans une église de deux coups de pistolet, puis il est guillotiné. Fin sans gloire d'un ambitieux...

Julien Sorel est le héros stendhalien par excellence, torturé par ses contradictions. Il séduit déjà deux femmes de natures tout à fait distinctes. L'une voit dans le jeune précepteur son fils aimé, l'autre est hautaine et orgueilleuse. Mathilde vit encore dans le passé et recherche en Julien son aïeul Boniface de la Mole, l'ami de la reine Marguerite de Navarre, un maître tyranne. De son côté, Julien ne pense qu'à lui, à aimer Mme de Rênal ou Melle de la Mole n'est qu'un prétexte afin de faire ses preuves dans cette haute société et atteindre son complexe d'infériorité. Pour d'être mal traité, pour surtout de paraître ridicule. Julien scrute, examine, analyse les moindres faits et gestes de ses conquêtes : Mme de Rênal retire sa main de la sienne. Ne serait-ce pas là une marque de mépris ? Paralyisé par l'obsession de son rang, Sorel ne parvient pas à éprouver de l'amour. Dans l'âme de ce jeune homme du peuple, les sentiments se brouillent.

Le Rouge et le Noir est une œuvre attirante. Son titre d'abord fascine par la netteté des couleurs. Le rouge, symbole d'un rêve militaire, peut-être le sang de Mme de Rênal répandu sur le sol de l'église. Le noir, choisi par le héros pour faire carrière en se servant de la religion, peut-être aussi le deuil que porte Mathilde à la mort de son mari.

Par ailleurs, dans cette société machévolée, l'hypocrisie n'est point un défaut. Au contraire, elle est justifiée, un avantage même dans un monde livré aux vices, où on ne trouve personne à admirer ou à respecter. Julien est l'un de ces hypocrites qui se sert des gens comme de ponts pour franchir les paliers de la hiérarchie sociale et réaliser ses rêves. En fait, Stendhal nous propose une chronique du XIX^e siècle, d'une génération de jeunes gens dont Sorel est le représentant. Mais au-delà de l'espace du roman, il est aussi le miroir d'une jeunesse actuelle qui rêve, comme Julien sublime Napoléon, de vivre d'autres temps plus héroïques. ■

Nissrine A. Sheikh

Et si on avait un week-end de deux jours...

Début avril, le Ministère des finances stupéfie le monde du travail en proposant un passage à deux jours de congés par semaine et une augmentation du nombre d'heures quotidiennes de travail. Depuis, les débats vont bon train.



«Ce projet n'aura aucune conséquence négative pour l'économie ou les travailleurs, notamment dans les secteurs de l'État qui sont considérés comme la partie non productive du pays. Au contraire, s'enthousiasme un spécialiste de la question, l'augmentation des jours de congés et des heures de travail nous donne la possibilité d'être en harmonie avec les banques, les entreprises et les bourses à l'étranger qui ont deux jours de vacances». Un directeur de banque se montre au contraire pessimiste : «Nous devons effectivement nous adapter dans nos relations avec les autres pays d'Occident. Or nous risquons, avec deux jours de congés le jeudi et le vendred,

d'être coupés du monde pendant quatre jours quand les autres sont en vacances le samedi et le dimanche. Si c'est ce projet qui l'emporte, je serai obligé de trouver du personnel pour travailler les jours de congés».

Pas comme les juifs

En outre, beaucoup s'inquiètent du manque à gagner : «Nous ne sommes pas ces grandes sociétés internationales qui ont atteint un tel niveau de production qu'elles peuvent se permettre de limiter les heures de travail et augmenter les vacances. Mais ici, en Jordanie, se persuade Mohammed Al-Karoui, un doyen d'université, on se plaint de notre manque de productivité, on

a donc besoin de beaucoup travailler pour rattraper notre retard».

D'autres se placent du point de vue de l'économie d'énergie : «Avec un jour de congés supplémentaire, c'est moins d'eau, d'électricité, de téléphone débranchés et on limite aussi la circulation», explique un ingénieur. Une opinion contestée par Ratib Al-Majali du Ministère du développement social : «On parle de faire des économies d'énergie alors qu'on va augmenter les heures de travail. Ce qu'on va économiser là, on le dépensera ailleurs».

Comme dans tous les débats en Jordanie, la famille joue également ici un rôle important. La plupart y voient une opportunité pour les parents de passer

plus de temps avec leurs enfants. D'autres craignent une recrudescence des problèmes de voisinage. Mazin Al-Ma'aita, président-joint de l'Union générale des syndicats ouvriers, s'inquiète et estime que «l'ouvrier ne saura pas comment exploiter son temps libre». Ou plutôt, il sait trop bien à quoi il pourra l'occuper et envisage déjà un gonflement catastrophique de la population. Reste que, selon un sondage réalisé par le Ministère de l'éducation, les trois-quarts des ouvriers sont d'accord avec l'idée d'avoir enfin deux jours de congés par semaine.

Enfin dernier enjeu de cette petite révolution, et pas des moindres, la religion. «Je préfère deux jours de vacances par semaine, mais j'insiste pour que cela soit le jeudi et le vendredi, déclare un étudiant, le vendredi parce que nous sommes une société musulmane et le jeudi pour ne pas faire comme les juifs qui prennent leur congé le samedi». Cette idée a largement été reprise lors de la dernière conférence consacrée à la question au début de ce mois. Une conférence dont rien n'est sorti. «Jusqu'à présent, nous ne sommes pas fixés, avoue Bassam Oumouche, le ministre du développement administratif chargé de ce dossier délicat, nous devons étudier la question sous tous ses aspects pour déterminer les avantages et éviter les inconvénients». Tout devait être décidé dès la fin d'avril. Mais apparemment le sujet demande plus d'heures supplémentaires que prévu. ■

Fatin Mansi

The Star Stadium

Edited by Abdul Hamid Addasi

New York welcomes a streamlined, star-studded Goodwill Games

NEW YORK—The Goodwill Games were launched in 1986 to ease the tensions of the Cold War. Twelve years later, the Soviet Union has collapsed, but the Goodwill Games are still around—the fourth installment of Ted Turner's brain child began last Sunday in New York.

It has not been easy road for the Goodwill Games, which opened in Moscow in 1986, moved to Seattle in 1990 and then to St. Petersburg, Russia in 1994. Turner began the Olympic-style games in response to the boycotts of 1980 and 1984, and his long-term vision is for his games to one day rival those of the traditional Olympic Games.

The Goodwill Games will be a more modest affair this time, featuring just 15 sports, down from 24 in 1994, but with an impressive roster of 1500 athletes from 60 nations. "The Games have grown in stature, and I think they have—in their own way—contributed greatly to world peace," said Turner.

Ticket sales, however, have been sluggish, but for those in attendance there will be an impressive collection of world class athletes at venues spaced throughout the New York area.

Long Island is hosting most of the events, with the track and field and women's soccer competition at the brand-new Nassau County Mitchell Athletic Complex. A new facility was constructed in Nassau County to host the swimming and diving competitions. Nassau Coliseum, home of the NHL's Islanders, will play host to the gymnastics and figure skating events.

Madison Square Gardens in New York City is hosting the boxing and basketball competition, whilst beach volleyball is taking place at Central Park. Staten Island is hosting the cycling competition.

The Goodwill Games organizers have promised US\$5 million in prize money, with star track athletes such as Michael Johnson, Dan O'Brien and Donovan Bailey expected to reap the lion's share. Johnson, however, announced he will not go for gold in both the 200 and 400 meters. Johnson announced that a lingering injury means that he will compete in just the 400m and the 1,600m relay only.

Track experts are calling the Goodwill Games one of the best meets of the summer, as it will include 18 gold medalists from Atlanta—including O'Brien, the current world champion who will return to defend his 1994 decathlon title.

The best of the track events will likely be the men's 100m between Canada's Bailey (the world record holder) and American Maurice Greene (1997 world champion) who is on the verge of becoming track's next superstar.

Gymnastics will occupy Nassau Coliseum for the opening week of the Goodwill Games.



Michael Johnson in customary pose

While some Atlanta medalists have sought riches on the professional circuit, the Goodwill roster will include Dominique Dawes and Dominique Moceanu, two gymnasts from the Magnificent 7 US gold medal-winning women's team. Aleksei Nemov, a six-time medalist at Atlanta, is the star competitor in men's gymnastics.

Figure skating will take over the Nassau Coliseum for the final few days of the Goodwill Games, and the spotlight will be on Michelle Kwan and Todd Eldredge of the USA and the perennial Russian contenders Irina Slutskaya, Maria Butyrskaya and Alexei Urmanov.

In basketball, the US team roster is stocked with collegiate players, but is still the pick of the field, that includes defending Goodwill Games champions Puerto Rico, Khalid El-Amin of Connecticut, Utah's Andre Miller and the Duke's Elton Brand headline the American squad. The Americans open against Puerto Rico on Sunday. The US team, which has struggled in recent international amateur competitions, has won medals in each of the three previous Goodwill Games. The Americans took gold in 1986, silver in 1990 and bronze in 1994.



Former heavyweight champion George Forman will celebrate his birthday in the ring with Larry Holmes

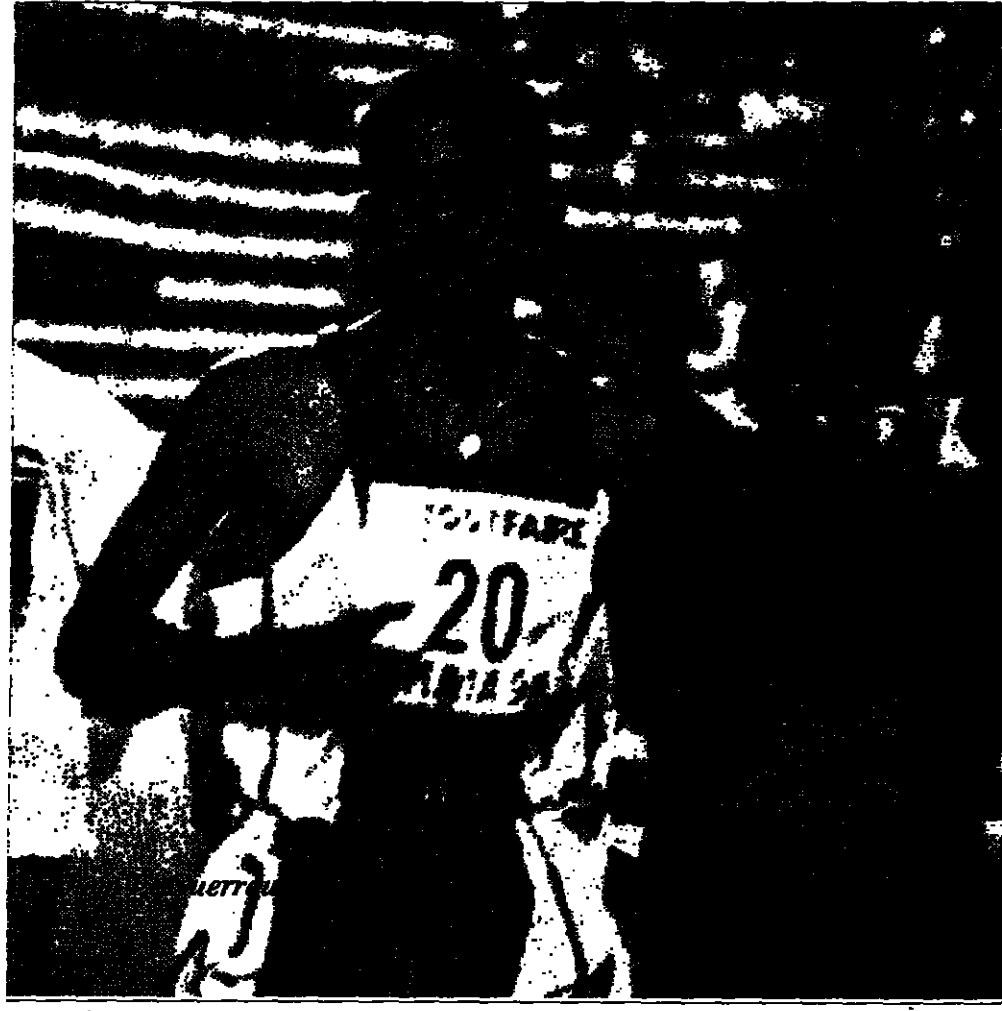
Moroccan successes in Nice sealed by El-Guerrouj

NICE, FRANCE—Hicham El Guerrouj of Morocco narrowly missed his second world record in a week, coming up 21 seconds short of the mile record in the Nida Grand Prix meet.

El Guerrouj, who set the 1,500-meter record last week in Rome, ran the mile in 3:44.60, just shy of Noureddine Morceli's 5-year-old record of 3:44.39. Morceli was due to run in the meet but pulled out with an injury. It was his 1,500 record of 3:27.37 that fell by the way when El Guerrouj ran a 3:26 in Rome's Golden Gala.

With Morceli out, El Guerrouj had the consolation of recording the second fastest mile time ever. "I was a little tired after Rome," El Guerrouj said.

Zahra Ouaziz of Morocco won the women's 3,000 meters in 8:28.66, edging out Ireland's Sonia Sullivan with the best time of the season. "I was running to win and not to beat a record," Ouaziz said. "My calf hurt really badly after the 5,000 meters in Rome. I stayed behind O'Sullivan at first so that she couldn't beat my best performance this year, and I ended up winning."



US advances to Davis Cup semi

Courier, Martin top Belgium in five-set doubles marathon

INDIANAPOLIS—Jim Courier replaced an injured Richey Reneberg and teamed with Todd Martin to beat a Belgian team as the United States advanced to the Davis Cup semifinals.

Courier and Martin, who had played only two matches together, defeated Belgium's Xavier Malisse and Johan Van Herck 5-7, 6-2, 6-7 (2-7), 7-6 (7-5), 6-1.

The victory gave the United States a 3-0 advantage in the best of 5 quarterfinal. The US will now play Italy in the semifinals, September 25-27. The matches will be played in the United States at a site to be determined.

Both teams changed doubles teams one hour before the match. Courier, who helped the United States sweep the opening singles, made his Davis Cup doubles debut after doctors determined Reneberg sustained a partial tear in his left knee during practice. He will have arthroscopic surgery on the knee and is expected to be sidelined for 3 to 6 weeks.

Belgium changed its previously announced lineup with Van Herck replacing Filip Dewulf.

The teams battled for three and a half hours with the court temperature topping 90 degrees.

It was the 18th straight US victory on home soil, a streak that dates back to 1987, when Germany beat the US in a qualifying round. It also extended Courier's streak of never having played on a losing US team on 12 occasions. US captain Tom Gullikson, who is 12-3 in that role, plans to give Courier a chance to extend this streak in September.

"They've got an invitation," said Gullikson, who had the same four players on the team when the US defeated Russia 3-2 in the opening round at Stone Mountain, Georgia, in April. "They get the first right of refusal."

The United States team, which took its time developing cohesiveness, was down 5-6 when it forced the tiebreaker in the fourth set. Courier, who had played only 11 doubles matches all year, then held them with four straight points.

Belgium won the first two points of the tiebreaker and the Americans responded to lead 5-3 and 6-4. The US then won the set as Van Herck—who like the 17-year-old Malisse—was making his Davis Cup doubles debut, was called for a double hit.

The loss of the set appeared to demoralize the Belgium team, and the Americans won the first five games of the last set. Van Herck then held and the US closed out the match.

Elsewhere, Switzerland stayed alive against Spain in its World Group quarterfinal at La Coruna, Spain. Marc Rosset and Lorenzo Mantia defeated Julian Alonso and Javier San-

Moscow Games prepares Jordanian athletes

By Abdul Hamid Addasi
Special to the Star

JORDAN CAME away from the first World Youth Games held in Moscow with no medals, but the results were promising for the future.

Jordan participated in Athletics, Table Tennis, Tennis, Gymnastics, Fencing, and Judo.

Jordan's Wafa Ahmad achieved 16th place in the 3000m, with a time of 10:30 minutes. She reached the finals after taking seventh place in the semi-finals with a time of 10:17 minutes. Amal Faouri also took place in the competition, but failed to get beyond the first round.

Jordan's best results were in tennis where Ahmad Al Hadeed reached the third

round after beating a Cambodian player in the first round and an African player in the second round, before losing to England's Greg Henick, one of the top seeds in the world.

Shawqi Dya performed well in Table Tennis, reaching 30th place among 191 participants. Dya overcame Belarus Shomakov 21-14, 18-21 and 21-18, and Vietnamese Tuam by default. He lost to Estonia's Demitri Mogtyev, Sweden's Nelson and to Italy's Del Sante.

The most remarkable performance was in gymnastics, in the 6-12 years old age group. Jordanian gymnast Ghid Qa'adan scored 8.62 in the wooden horse event. The other team players performed well, but failed to qualify for the next round.

More than 130 countries took part in the event. Russia dominated most of the games and took first place on the Medals scoreboard, with 44 gold medals. Arab countries took four medals, in Fencing and Athletics. It was a good opportunity to prepare for future international events, especially as Jordan is preparing to host the next Pan Arab Games next year.

The Star
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Bin Sulayem leads Rallye du Liban

BEIRUT—The "22nd Rallye du Liban" has begun, with Bin Sulayem immediately taking the lead.

In second place is Norway's Peter Solberg who is 4.18 minute behind. In third place is last year's winner, Jean Pierre Nasrallah, who had problems at the beginning of the race but recovered to take third place from Armen Schwartz who retired after an accident.

The 1992 Lebanon Champion, Bagera, had mechanical problems and was delayed for around 10 minutes, dropping down to 20th place. With great determination though he managed to climb back to 12th position.

The UAE's Mohammed bin Sulayem unleashed a scorching pace during Special Stage Four to clock a record time and lead the pack. Sulayem's roaring performance in stage four after leading the first three, gave him a comfortable lead in this treacherous rally, which attracted thousands of spectators.

The 17.93 km Ain Aaya special stage—a long, sinuous road with a spectacular start—found the UAE cham-

pion in top form as he led a fast race. "The roads are a bit slippery. But I hope to retain this lead," said "Marlboro 18" Sulayem, who had to pull out at around this time last year after being in the lead.

At the end of stage five Sulayem had a 1.10 minute lead over Peter Solberg with the German Schwarz fighting back after a poor start to stay within striking distance in third place. The Norwegian Solberg in a Toyota Celica GT4 also turned in a consistent performance, to finish second in all five stages. "We had problems when we went off the road slightly, and a little later we were hit by radiator problems. However I hope to improve our timing," said Solberg.

Mechanical problems dogged Schwarz in the early stages but the European champion, in a car better-suited to tarmac did well after trailing in eighth place at stage 3 to finish third after five stages.

The rally-loving Lebanese had lots to cheer about, with last year's champion Jean-Pierre Nasrallah doing well to stay in the race in fourth place despite falling to eighth place at the start of stage four. Nasrallah who won



Mohammed bin Sulayem

a thriller last year, posting a narrow win over Saudi Arabia's Balhasaab, was hit by a flat tyre

and a broken bumper. Countryman Bagera, the 1992 champion, fell back due to a flat tyre after

being in the top four. Though adding a lot of cheer to the local fans, Bagera said it was very difficult to regain the lost time and seemed resigned to his fate.

The host country's Roger Feghali led the Group N pack with compatriot Philippe Kazan close behind, as both finished 5th and 6th overall. Abu Dhabi Rally Team's Salem Sahal Bin Sheban in partnership with new co-driver Tom Staele in Group N encountered bad luck with both tyre and brake problems on the winding mountain route. After being flagged off 12th behind Sulayem, the Abu Dhabi champ was in 22nd position.

Provisional results: (After five special stages)

1. Mohammed bin Sulayem/Ronan Morgan (UAE-Ireland) Ford Escort Cosworth, 50.03 minutes.
2. P. Solberg/C. Menkerud (Norway) Toyota Celica GT4, 51.03 minutes.
3. A. Schwarz/M. Hiemer (Germany) Peugeot 306 S16 Maxi, 52.48 minutes.
4. J.P. Nasrallah/J. Matar (Lebanon) Renault Megane Maxi, 53.13 minutes.
5. R. Feghali/S. Sfier (Lebanon) Renault Clio Wil-



Javier Sanjaez Vieja in a five-set doubles marathon: 3-6, 6-3, 6-4, 7-6, 7-6-2

Spain leads 2-1 and still needs one more victory in Sunday's singles when French Open champion Carlos Moya plays Rosset and Alex Corretja faces Ivo Heuberger.

In Hamburg, Sweden's Jonas Bjorkman and Nicklas Kulti beat Boris Becker and David Prinosil 4-6, 7-6 (7-5), 7-5 (7-5), 6-4 to take a 2-1 lead over Germany. Sweden needs just one victory by either Bjorkman or Thomas Enqvist in Sunday's singles against Nicolas Kiefer and Tommy Haas to advance to the semifinals.

In Prato, Italy, Andrea Gaudenzi and Diego Nargiso beat brothers Byron and Wayne Black of Zimbabwe 1-6, 7-5, 7-5, 6-3 to put Italy into the semifinals for the third straight

THE STAR'S WORKSTATION COMPUTING & HIGH TECH NOTES

Edited by Zeid Nasser

Computer & IT companies:

Welcome to The Star's Workstation, the absolute source on what's hot and what's not in Jordan's IT market. email us at: Star@NETS.com.jo or star1@jo.com.jo with your news and views.

Study reveals, over 21,000 users on-line in Jordan: 122 million Internet users worldwide

THE NUMBER of Internet users in the Arab World has been growing at a breathtaking rate, especially over the past three years.

Although there are no official figures on the numbers of Internet and on-line service users in Arab countries, a collection of surveys, and Internet Service Provider announcements can be fused together, producing rough estimates based on reasonable sense.

Dabbagh Information Technology group (DIT)—headquartered in Saudi Arabia—has delivered an impressive study, which includes figures on the Internet users in Middle Eastern countries and some general figures on users worldwide.

As the report states, estimates of users on-line are usually inaccurate as it is extremely difficult to get a precise figure. Based on an 'educated' guess, there are some 122 million people on-line worldwide.

Of these, 70 million are in the USA and Canada, 24 million in Europe, 19 million in the Asia/Pacific region, 7.25 million in South America, 750,000 in the Middle East and 800,000 in Africa.

The figures on the Middle East countries enjoy higher 'Internet awareness' with countries like Qatar and Kuwait showing percentages of population on-line ranging between 2.15 to 3.1 percent.

Naturally, Egypt, with its huge population, recorded the lowest percentage of Internet users relative to the population. But also, to its credit, recorded the highest number of Internet users in a Middle Eastern country (61,021).

East reveal a number of interesting trends, most noteworthy of which is an impressive jump in the number of Internet users since the middle of last year. Relative to the population, the figures show that the smaller

accounts in use in Jordan are less than 12,000, but it is quite normal to expect an average of 1.7 users per account.

In fact, this may be a conservative figure.

The really interesting figures are the 6-month growth estimates from July 1997 to January 1998.

According to these estimates, the number of Internet users in Jordan was around 11,840 in July 1997.

Now, that is quite thrilling. If correct, all the Internet Service Providers currently operating in Jordan should be very pleased.

Modern suppliers should be even happier!

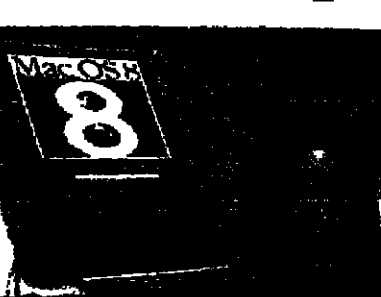
As a matter of fact, looking at the 6-month growth figures for Arab countries, you will notice that the number of Internet users has increased twofold, especially Qatar, Egypt and Oman.

Country	Internet Users Jan 97	Internet Users Jan 98
UAE	45,150	68,557
Egypt	35,520	65,021
Lebanon	11,340	20,223
Qatar	35,820	43,520
Kuwait	8,365	17,295
Oman	29,600	42,350
Bahrain & Saudi Arabia	11,425	20,868
	35,490	45,438

Apple is on the up again!

FOR THE first time in three years, Apple has managed to register a profit for three quarters running: thanks in a great part to the success of its new G3 processor standard. Apple Computer Inc. earned \$101 million in its fiscal third quarter. This same period, one year ago, \$56 million was lost.

Commenting on this success, interim CEO, Steve Jobs, stated that, "Apple had a terrific quarter—we sold a record number of Power Macintosh G3 computers, customers love our new PowerBooks, Apple earned its highest profit in



unseen for many years. Apple's next challenge is to secure a successful launch for the new Mac.

The iMac is Apple's newest computer which is targeting the consumer market. The \$1,299 system comes with a 233-megahertz G3 processor.

years and we ended the quarter with the lowest inventory level among the major PC players."

Facing strong demand, Apple needs to keep up in terms of production.

Running at full capacity on some models, Apple is enjoying a production expansion

This will mark Apple's late, but powerful, entry into the lower-end home PC market: where PC compatibles dominate. This is part of the 'remake' of Apple Computer.

This is all good news to Macintosh users all over the world: the Mac is back!

News update

New servers from Compaq

Compaq Middle East has announced the introduction of two new ranges of ProLiant Servers in the region: the ProLiant 700 and 600.

These will include quadruple Pentium II processors, at a speed of 400MHz.

Compaq is targeting these servers at the demanding applications market of databases. The servers are designed with a focus on guaranteeing flexibility and 'openness' for future upgrades.

Netscape introduces Communicator 4.5

Netscape, the producer of popular browser software, has recently introduced the first public beta of Communicator 4.5: providing users with the opportunity to test the new browser software before its launch.

Communicator 4.5 integrates Netscape's NetCenter Web portal site with the browser. The idea is to provide more ease-of-use, and offers easier update facilities.

Communicator 4.5 will be

1 million copies of Windows 98

Microsoft claims that it has already sold 1 million copies of the Windows 98 upgrade, which was launched on June 25, 1998.

In fact, Microsoft expects Windows 98 sales to bring in some \$150 million in the coming quarter.

Microsoft is hard at work, preparing for its upcoming suite of applications, Office 2000 and Windows NT 5.0.

Nintendo 64 games console hits back at Sony PlayStation

THE GAMES console market has been witnessing a heated battle since 1996, with the Nintendo 64, Sony PlayStation (PSX) and Sega Saturn being the main contenders.

The Nintendo 64 was released in Japan during June 1996. It sold 800,000 units in its first month and reached 1 million within only 3 months!

However, its sales experienced somewhat of a drop, with the introduction of the Sony PlayStation.

Making a comeback, as of the middle of 1997, the Nintendo 64 has been selling more units worldwide.

In the Middle East, it is a top seller, competing neck-and-neck with the Sony PlayStation.

The wide games library, and the quality of titles available have meant that the Nintendo 64 received a major push from

software publishers.

In Japan, Nintendo 64 sales have reached 2.7 million.

As for worldwide sales, Nintendo 64 reached 9.3 million units, and 4.5 million in USA alone!

This means that some 4.8 units have been sold in Europe and the rest of the world!

The rivalry with the Sony PlayStation can best be seen in Europe, where the PlayStation enjoyed a 6 month lead.

Worldwide, based on figures from mid-1996 to mid-1997, the PlayStation had sold 12 million units! This is higher than the Nintendo 64, but things are set to change into 1998.

The release of top games for Nintendo 64 like Zelda 64, Pocket Monsters 64, and Quest 64 will pave the way for the Nintendo 64 comeback.

INTERFACE

BY ZEID NASSER

Expiry dates for PCs?

A FRIEND of mine made a very interesting suggestion. He said that PCs should carry expiration dates, just like canned food! He must have been frustrated at the fact that the 166MHz PC he bought last year looks quite outdated now.

Looking at this aspect of computing, I suppose it is time that PC manufacturers became more open about this whole issue of 'how long will a PC serve you before you need to spend more money on an upgrade.' Many complain of the fact that their pockets can't keep up with PC technology, so it seems normal.

Years ago, the entry level standard would definitely serve your needs for at least two years. Nowadays, the high-end processor may not be sufficient for demanding software within one year!

People buying computers nowadays are just regular consumers, who don't have much technical knowledge. Making their lives easier, with basic information on developments in microprocessors and when the PC they buy today will need an upgrade, would be a good idea.

Inspection of CD software

AS PART of the law controlling audiovisual materials, number 8 of the year 1997, CD software has come under increased inspection on a very detailed basis.

This is being enacted according to a recent addition to the above mentioned law, decided on in 1998, by the Ministerial Council. Basically, the law states that every CD software item has to be inspected by the responsible authorities (Press & Publications Dept.) The importers of CD software will have to pay a fee for the inspection; around JD 25 per inspected CD.

Inspection is conducted thoroughly, and is carried out by staff trained at the use of computer software.

The point is that most software importers were not prepared for this law, and therefore have to accept the payment of whatever sums required for these inspections.

Additionally, due to the fact that many CD-ROM importers order a variety of titles (whether business or entertainment software) a sample of each title has to be inspected and this could result in a large inspection bill.

Even CDs containing hardware drivers (the software you need to install to run an add-on card or peripheral) has to go through inspection. So, the graphics card, for example, passes through customs, but the CDs loaded with the drivers have to be collected after paying for inspection. If the software passes inspection, every copy has to be stamped with the date of its inspection and process number.

Of course, the idea behind the law is to prevent the distribution of CD software including any morally unacceptable content, or whatever content that may harm national security. This is fine, as the law applies to music, video, movies and every other audio visual storage media coming into Jordan. But software has some particularities, which need to be addressed, for it to be practical to carry out inspection.

The Jordan Computer Society (JCS) is working to bring Government officials and representatives of the private sector together, for better understanding of the nature of CD Software.

This matter of CD Software inspection has just arisen, and there will be more developments regarding it in the coming weeks. For now, it should be interesting to closely watch how the inspection process will be conducted in such a way to maintain the benefit of the Government, importers and users.

Oxford University to launch degree courses over Internet

By Simon Targett

OXFORD UNIVERSITY is to offer degree courses over the internet under plans which could transform the prestige of distance learning.

The venture, part of a policy to widen access to Britain's oldest university, will offer the glittering prize of an Oxford education without students having to step inside one of the ancient colleges.

It is backed by Paul Allen, the US entrepreneur and co-founder of Microsoft, whose virtual education foundation is to fund the online courses to be launched next year.

Oxford's first online degrees will be offered to postgraduate students in medicine, computing and software engineering.

The university's elite undergraduate degrees may eventually be delivered on the internet, although there is resistance from traditionalists who think Oxford's collegiate experience must remain an essential part of any course.

Oxford tutors will supervise studies using e-mail, internet discussions and voice-based conferencing. Occasional face-to-face meetings in Oxford may be built into the programme.

The masters degrees will be studied part-time and will typically take four years to complete. The work will be staged, the first two years leading to a certificate, the third to a diploma, and the fourth resulting in an Oxford masters degree.

Examinations are expected to be held in Oxford but foreign-based students may be permitted to use the network of British Council offices around the world.

Oxford's first online masters students are scheduled to begin their studies within five years, after the university's phased introduction of



the internet degree programme.

Two courses will be offered in January: a two-year course in computing costing £1,200 and a £600 one-year local history course. An internet course in immunology is planned to start three months later.

Geoffrey Thomas, director of the university's department for continuing education, said the courses would bring the Oxford tutorial within the reach of the distance learner.

They would be designed around a new concept of online tutorial support and would allow part-time students to study at their own pace.

Dr Thomas welcomed the \$500,000 development grant from Mr Allen's foundation, saying it would 'help ensure that Oxford's position as a leading university is reinforced via the global medium of the internet.'

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23 JULY 1998

Film

'The Mask of Zorro'

By Stephen Hunter

WASHINGTON—In "The Mask of Zorro," you see a figure with hot flashing eyes, the lightning-quick moves of a panther, a deftly flicking sword arm that could inscribe the New York Times, crossword on a button, and a passion that reaches out of the screen and grabs you by the lapels.

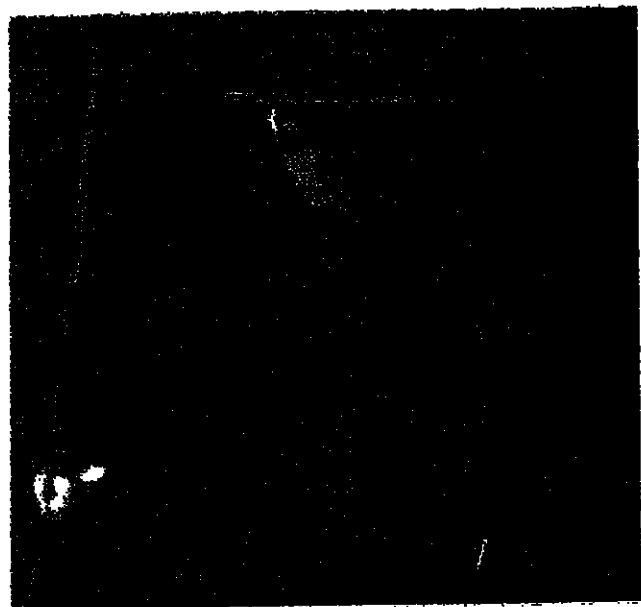
And that's the girl! Catherine Zeta-Jones, instant star, the new Rita Hayworth, as in, yes, I say again, yes yes yes yes yes. Zeta-Jones plays—well, the plot is somewhat garbled, as if modeled on a piece of wrought iron from the balconies of Barcelona—but let us just say, she's the girl. Zorro likes her. The Spanish governor Montero likes her. Zorro's mentor likes her, because he used to be Zorro and he is in fact her papa. The American mercenary renegade likes her. The peasants like her. I like her. Everybody likes her. There's something about Elena.

As for the rest of the film, it can be summed up as follows: I went to a sword fight the other night, and a movie broke out.

"The Mask of Zorro" is entertaining without being exhilarating. It's fun at about 62 percent of the level from the old Errol Flynn swashbucklers in the late '30s. As Zorro movies go, it's pretty good. As movies go, it's a little bit better than okay.

Zorro, which means "fox" in Spanish, has been around since a crime reporter with a lurid imagination and a leaden pen made him up in 1919. Usually played by grinning gringos of the Tom Dewey-mustache variety, like a Fairbanks, a Power or a Guy Williams, he is now played by a gentleman—for the first time—both authentically Hispanic and authentically mustacheless, Antonio Banderas.

The accent, therefore, may be accurate but the moves are nevertheless predictable, though to be fair, they still enchant. Zorro, after all, is the original man in black as well as the original masked man, and Banderas gets all the moves right, more important, he looks good in tight pants. I also like a man with a graduate degree in bullwhip gymnastics and improvised field evacuation techniques. He finds the usual astonishing number of trees, flagpoles, castle battlements and, oh yes, flagpoles, to snap that lash



around and then zip himself out of trouble.

Plot? A lot. In fact, too much. It seems stolen from one of the lost episodes of "The Wild, Wild West," the old western that tried to stick secret agent conspiracy shenanigans in among the sagebrush and the arroyos. As "Mask" has it, the old Zorro—Anthony Hopkins, bringing Hamlet's moody gravitas to a movie that in no other way deserves or matches it—escapes from prison after 20 years growing a beard and nurturing a steely glare. Evil despotism having returned to old California, he recruits a new Zorro, a young thief, to wage war on a Spanish governor who is enslaving

peasants to mine the gold from El Dorado to buy California from Mexico (it's roughly 1841); the movie



could also be called "Indiana Zorro" and the Lost Gold Mine. There's even a beach-boy-looking blond American named Love (Matt Letscher) around to bedevil everyone and die of close encounters of the sword kind.

Stuart Wilson, who specializes in villainy (as in "Lethal Weapon 3"), plays the vicious, hypocritical Governor Montero. He seems to get these parts when other, more charismatic actors turn them down. What a nasty Montero Basil Rathbone would have made; what a nasty one Sean Bean or Steven Berkoff would make. But Wilson's chap is dour, bland, grouchy, unmemorable, a serious flaw in the movie's melodramatic calculations.

"The Mask of Zorro" really strikes sparks only twice; once is a dance scene between those hotblooded kids, Banderas and Zeta-Jones, and another is an erotically charged duel scene, in which they cross blades, wills and, ultimately, tongues. He's great; she's fabulous. Watch her face light up with passion and exhilaration and pure alpha-being joy. Watch her quickness. Watch her beauty.

Finally, watch her career. It's probably the fastest-moving flying object in the summer skies. In this version of the film, the letter Z again takes on huge significance—but it's the Z that stands for Zeta-Jones. ■

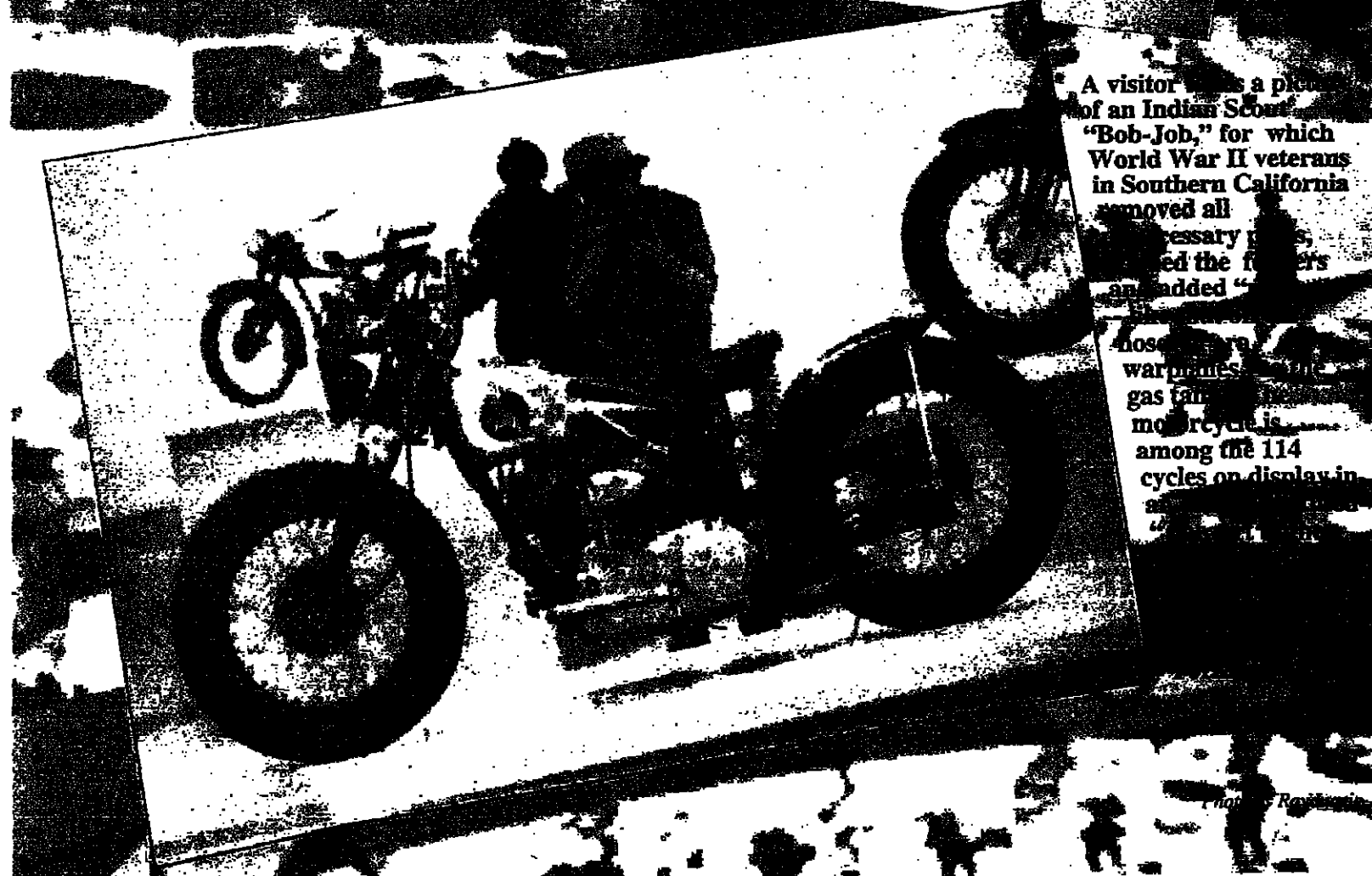
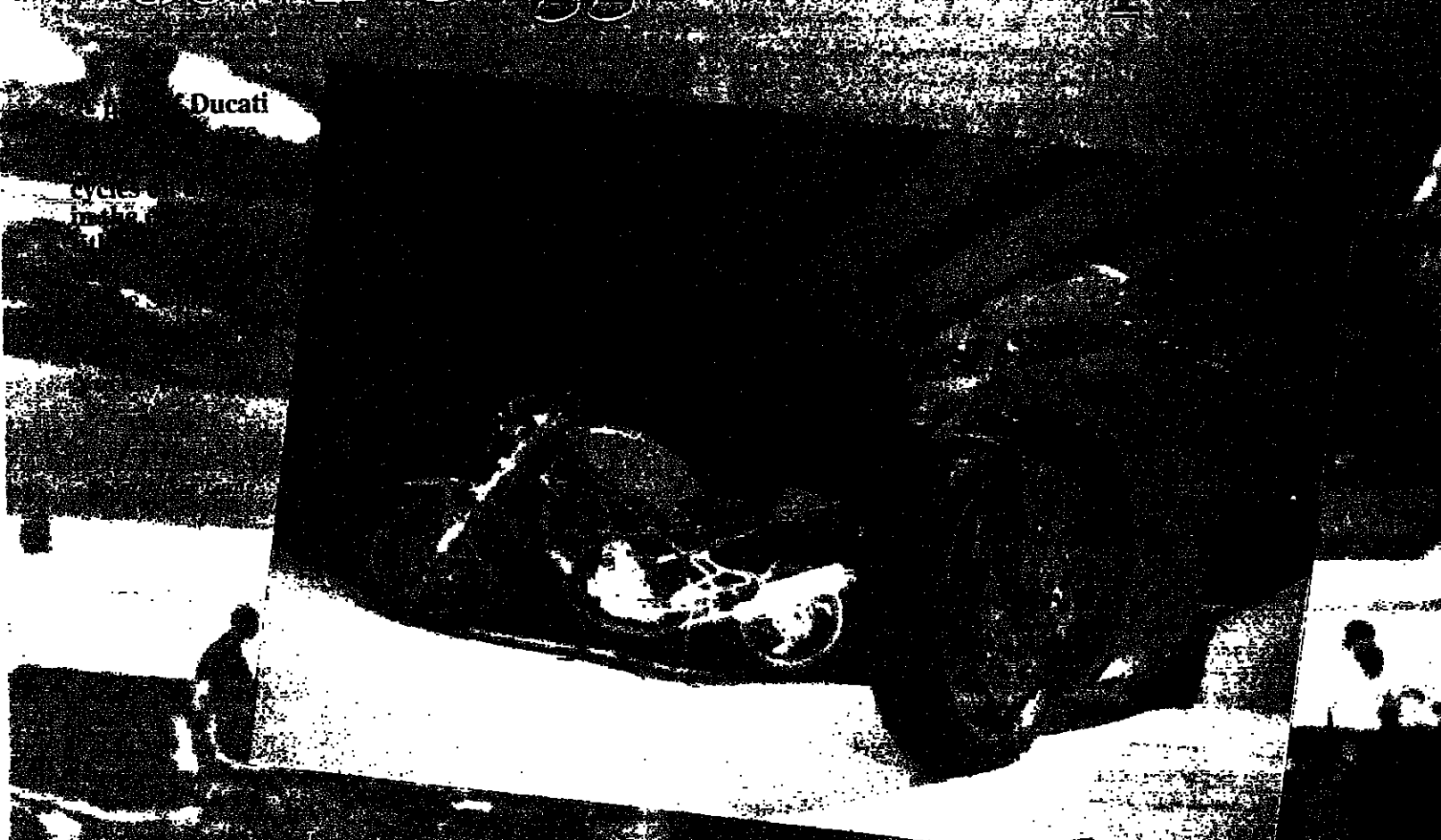
LA Times-Washington Post News Service



John C.

Karl

'Art of the Motorcycle' speeds down Guggenheim's spiral



A visitor takes a picture of an Indian Scout "Bob-Job," for which World War II veterans in Southern California removed all unnecessary parts, added the fenders and added "Bob-Job" to the name. Those are the warplanes, gas tanks, and motorcycles among the 114 cycles on display in the museum.